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**Genealogy as Theatre of Self-Identity: a study of
genealogy as a cultural practice within Britain since
c. 1850**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**University of Glasgow
Faculty of Arts/Department of Humanities
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December 2009

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation of genealogical inquiry, but rather than interpreting genealogical activity first and foremost as a branch of history, I analyse genealogy as a form of semi-autobiographical narrative about the self. Instead of viewing the use of archives primarily as a marker of historical scholarship, I investigate the archive as a shared space or horizon in which stories about the self and one's descent are enacted, a theatrical space in which the 'narratability' of the self and of others is exposed.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a 'heritagraphical' overview of genealogical knowledge where I argue that the pre-war history of genealogy is worth investigating; genealogy is a diverse cultural practice with its own history, historical agents and situated communities. The second chapter, 'Archivization of Genealogical Knowledge', explores the development of genealogy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by investigating the circulation of genealogical knowledge in the public sphere of antiquarian print culture, gender and genealogy, the connections between eugenics, genealogy and archives, and the influence of the American diaspora upon the production and consumption of genealogy within Britain. The third chapter, 'Narrating the Genealogical Self', develops the metaphor of the archive as a theatre of self-identity by exploring several texts, including *A Family Record* (1932), *Roots* (1976) and the television programmes, *Who Do You Think You Are?* and *Motherland: A Genetic Journey*. In doing so, 'the archive' is expanded to not only include the traditional notion of an institutional repository of written documentary sources, but also more recent conceptions of the archive as a body of immutable biological code, as the consignment of unique hidden traces, or as the compilation of autobiographical memory.

I conclude by arguing that genealogy can represent a desire for semi-autobiographical narrative through which the self is revealed as both a unified self and as a 'unique existent'. This is how archives disclose to us who we are. In this way, this thesis demonstrates that archives have another function than that of providing tangible evidence of business transactions; they have an ontological function of being necessary 'other' evidentiary witnesses, revealing the narratability of who we are as unique historical beings, who, nevertheless, do not stand alone.

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Acknowledgements

I sincerely thank my supervisors, Michael Moss and Susan Stuart for their untiring and enthusiastic guidance. Without their encouragement and help I would not have had the courage to think, explore and write. I thank my fellow postgraduates in HATII and the Faculty of Arts who have been an invaluable source of information and companionship – James Girdwood, Louise Cameron, Lindsey Short, Tony Ross, David Macknet, Elizabeth Anderson, Marc Alexander, Fiona Stewart, Jenny Craig, Ruth Hawthorn, Erin McGuire and Johanna Green. I also thank those archivists, genealogists, librarians and academics who kindly responded to my requests for help and gave me their time, in particular Susan Tucker, Maggie Loughran, Ronald D. Lambert, Simon Titley-Bayes, David Sabeau, Michael Drake, Tim Salls, Laurence Brockliss, Adam Kuper, Matthew Hillyard, Ann Carson and Adrian Ailes. Without the support of others this thesis would not have been written. All mistakes, of course, are my own. I am very grateful for the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council which has enabled me to carry out this research. Last, but not least, I thank Martin who has been lovely – especially during the times when I have not been.

Abbreviations

BL	British Library
CAMPOP	Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
FFHS	Federation of Family History Societies
GCRC	Genealogical Co-operative Research Club
GRO	General Record Office
GSU	Genealogical Society of Utah
GUL	Glasgow University Library
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
IHR	Institute of Historical Research, London
LDS	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
mtDNA	mitochondrial deoxyribonucleic acid
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
NLS	National Library of Scotland
PRO	Public Record Office
SARC	Scots Ancestry Research Council
TNA	The National Archives (England and Wales)
UCL	University College London
WL	Wellcome Library
Y-DNA	Y- chromosome deoxyribonucleic acid

<i>Album</i>	<i>Life History Album</i>
<i>Directory</i>	<i>International Genealogical Directory</i>
<i>Inquiries</i>	<i>Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development</i>
<i>Record</i>	<i>Record of Family Faculties</i>

Introduction

On the 11 January 2006, Jeremy Paxman, the hard-hitting anchorman for *Newsnight*, broke down in tears on national television. The British nation was amazed to see this man, known for his merciless interrogation of politicians, crying over a letter submitted to the poor relief board and, later on in the programme, a death certificate.¹ After discovering that his great-grandmother had died at the age 35 of “TB and exhaustion”, leaving his grandfather an orphan, he commented that: “Thousands of people must have lived like this and died like this. When it’s numbers it doesn’t mean anything – I don’t know these people, I wouldn’t recognise them if I fell over them – but I’m connected to them.” After shedding a few more tears, he concluded: “You shouldn’t go into this family business, it’s just upsetting.”²

Four years earlier, on 2 January 2002, the 1901 Census website was launched by the Public Record Office (PRO).³ Within the first week of its commencement, one million, two hundred thousand users per hour tried to access the site, causing the server to collapse and a national audit to be instigated. By 31 October 2003, the re-launched site was receiving between eight and ten thousand visitors a day and had generated gross revenues of up to four and a half million pounds.⁴ Genealogy is big business and today family historians represent a significant proportion of archival users.⁵ In 1999, three quarters of one hundred and fifteen English and Welsh local authority record repositories reported that fifty per cent or more of their users were family historians.⁶ A user survey undertaken in 2002 of the online portal, Access to Archives (A2A), found that eighty per cent were family

¹ Hugh Davies, 'Paxman in tears as he reads about the death of an ancestor', *Daily Telegraph*, 8 December 2005 p. 4; Kenny Farquharson, 'Jeremy Paxman fought back tears when he discovered his great grandmother had been widowed - Focus', *Sunday Times*, 11 December 2005, p. 19; Morgan James, 'Meet the granny who made Paxman cry The inquisitor discovers he is a Clan Mackay descendant', *The Herald*, 8 December 2005; Ian Johns, 'Paxo's tough side is history. Or is it? - Last night's TV', *The Times*, 12 January 2006 p. 27; Robert McNeil, 'Last Night's Review', *The Scotsman*, 12 January 2006 p. 44.

² 'Episode 1: Jeremy Paxman', *Who Do You Think You Are?* Series Two. Dir. Reita Oord and Simon Chu. Prod. Alex Graham, Maxine Watson, and Lucy Carter. BBC/ Wall to Wall/ Acorn Media. 2006. [broadcast 11 January 2006].

³ From April 2003, the PRO became known as The National Archives (TNA) for England, Wales and the United Kingdom.

⁴ National Audit Office., *Unlocking the Past: The 1901 Census Online: Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General HC 1259, Session 2002-2003* (London: The Stationary Office, 14 November 2003) pp. 1-2, <http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0203/unlocking_the_past_the_1901_c.aspx> [accessed 5 June 2009].

⁵ The pre-launch marketing and planning of the 1901 census website was based on the distinction between family historians, who were defined as those within family history societies and were estimated as two hundred and fifty thousand and the general public including overseas users. Ibid. pp. 8-9.

⁶ Rosemary Boyns, 'Archivists and Family Historians: local authority record repositories and the family history group', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 20:1 (1999), 61-74, p. 63.

historians. The LEADERS research project (2001-2004) found that sixty per cent of its users were using archives for their own personal leisure, with eighty-four per cent of this group looking for families as opposed to other topics.⁷ But where did this interest come from? When people say that they want to find out ‘who they are’ by discerning where their ancestors came from, what do they mean and what do they expect? Are these new questions and assumptions that are specific to a modern age? To what extent does family history spring from an antiquarian tradition, and if so, what are its connections with modernity? What are the implications of these questions for archives, and more broadly for British culture and society?

Certainly initial investigation reveals significant tensions in the archive office between historians and genealogists, and indeed between professional genealogists and those seeking to find out ‘who they are.’⁸ In servicing genealogists, or “recreational users”, Ian Mortimer argues that archivists have compromised their own professionalism and undermined the archives’ principle duty. This duty, he suggests, is not to provide a leisure service, but to support the writing of history and to provide “the evidence on which the integrity and judgement of our public institutions, and of individual decision-makers and opinion-formers may be vouched for or called into question”.⁹ The view that historians have been neglected at the expense of genealogy is borne out by a few of the users’ comments taken as part of the National Audit Office’s report into the launch of the 1901 census:

The online service is good in the sense of servicing the core constituency [but] poor in the sense of serving the constituency outside genealogy.

The needs of academics, local historians and demographers that are not looking for information by name but by place, occupations etc. have not yet been fully met.

Social inclusion has improved but only as far as genealogy and family history is concerned.¹⁰

⁷ Amanda Hill, ‘Serving the Invisible Researcher: Meeting the Needs of Online Users’, *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 25:2 (2004), 139-48, pp. 140-41.

⁸ Stacey Gee, ‘A Standard Service for All? The case for a flexible attitude’, *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 23:2 (2002), 233-38; Susan Tucker, ‘Doors Opening Wider: Library and Archival Services to Family History’, *Archivaria*, 62 (2006), 127-58.

⁹ *Archives at the Millenium: the twenty-eighth report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 1991–1999* (1999), p 4 cited by Ian Mortimer, ‘Discriminating Between Readers: the case for a policy of flexibility’, *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 23:1 (2002), 59-67, p. 62.

¹⁰ National Audit Office., *Unlocking the Past: The 1901 Census Online: Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General HC 1259, Session 2002-2003* p. 24.

These views are familiar to archivists, who have the tough job of balancing the needs of their user-groups. Their main response has been to stress that all archival users should be treated equally no matter their topic of research;¹¹ as Patrick Cadell has argued: “I do not think it is for anyone to question a researcher’s motives.”¹² But this tension between the genealogical hobbyist and the professional historian has perhaps contributed to the lack of intellectual debate over archival use, corroborating Mortimer’s argument that archivists have succumbed to political correctness and intellectual laziness.¹³ Despite some references to online genealogy and genealogical tourism as potential sources of revenue, archivists have not fully grappled with the notion of democratic access and use of archives, the role of genealogy within such use, and, indeed, the history of such use.¹⁴ As the archivist Rosemary Boyns states, family historians “are almost invisible in archival literature”.¹⁵

However, there are signs that this is changing. Michael Moss, reflecting upon his own family history has mused upon the meaning of genealogy, the choreographed encounter between public and private archives, and the notion of the democratisation of history.¹⁶ The archivist Susan Tucker’s doctoral research has employed ethnographic methodology and records continuum theory to investigate the recordkeeping practices of family historians and the creators of heritage albums amongst different communities in Alabama and Louisiana.¹⁷ Eric Ketelaar’s study of family archives from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries analyses the role of the Florentine *ricordanze*, a type of commonplace or memory book where the records of the family were kept.¹⁸ He compares the *ricordanze* with the pedigrees, cartularies, family letters of early modern England and the office genealogies of

¹¹ Boyns, 'Archivists and Family Historians: local authority record repositories and the family history group', p. 65.

¹² Patrick Cadell, 'Building on the Past, Investing in the Future through Genealogy and Local History Services', *IFLA Journal*, 28:4 (2002), 175-80, p. 179.

¹³ Mortimer, 'Discriminating Between Readers: the case for a policy of flexibility', p. 62.

¹⁴ Hill, 'Serving the Invisible Researcher: Meeting the Needs of Online Users', p. 143; Rob Mildren, '1.4 Genealogical Tourism', *Scottish Archive Network Project Evaluation Report* (21 April 2004), <<http://www.scan.org.uk/aboutus/report.htm#14>> [accessed 23 July 2009].

¹⁵ Boyns, 'Archivists and Family Historians: local authority record repositories and the family history group', p. 62.

¹⁶ Michael Moss, 'Choreographed Encounter-The Archive and Public History', *Archives*, 32:116 (2007), 41-57.

¹⁷ Susan Tucker, 'The most public of all history: family history and heritage albums in the transmission of records' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2009).

¹⁸ Eric Ketelaar, 'The Genealogical Gaze: Family Identities and Family Archives in the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries', *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 44:1 (2009), 9-28, p. 12.

the Netherlands during the Golden Age, concluding that during this period the “boundaries between public and private memories and archives were permeable if not nonexistent.”¹⁹

Yet despite these efforts there is still plenty of scope for further research. Recently Louise Craven wrote that: “the growth in genealogy and interest in personal history had begun long before the TV series *Who Do You Think You Are?*. Archivists, however, still know little about the users of archives and record offices: little about why records *fascinate*.”²⁰ (her emphasis). This study not only encompasses research into the history and phenomenon of genealogy, but also is an exploration of the role archives play in society and is part of an ongoing debate centred upon what archives are and why they matter. Archives can simply be defined as places where important and historical documents are kept, “a repository of public records or of records generally.”²¹ From the nineteenth century onwards, they have been the “primary sites of the labor and legitimacy of professional historians, their equivalent of laboratories or fieldwork.”²² The term ‘archives’ includes the evidential records or documents that testify to past actions and events which are kept by such institutions. However, this definition tends to overlook the performative nature of the archive and of archives – the work of those, whether professional or non-professional, who decide what should be kept, and of the way in which the use and sharing of archives can re-define and challenge its purposes. Ketelaar writes that the “archive is an infinite activation of the record.”²³ As such, this thesis takes ‘archives’ and ‘archive’ to stand for a broader set of notions, which encompasses not only the traditional definition of a place of official deposit, but also the performance of keeping and using things to tell us about the past and ourselves.

Because genealogy straddles the private and public domains, and is about the familial and the personal, it both challenges and shifts focus from the traditional notion of the centralized national archive, opening up a space in which to develop and explore the processes of archivization and its political and social roles. It is precisely because of genealogy’s ambivalent status that it justifies further study, as Hugh A. Taylor – who had been an English local authority archivist before he emigrated to Canada – wrote in 1982: “family history is becoming not just a pastime, but a search for personal identity in an era

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁰ Louise Craven, ‘From the Archivist’s Cardigan to the Very Dead Sheep: What are Archives? What are Archivists? What do They Do?’, in *What are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: A Reader*, ed. by Louise Craven (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 7-30, p. 15.

²¹ ‘archive’ in *The Chambers Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers, 2001), p.80.

²² Randolph Starn, ‘Truths in the Archives’, *Common Knowledge*, 8:2 (2002), 387-401, p.387.

²³ Eric Ketelaar, ‘Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives’, *Archival Science*, 1 (2001), 131-141, p.137.

of intensive and rapid change.”²⁴ This thesis can be seen as an exploration of a new kind of fetishisation of the archive where the archive is not only used and revered as a source of evidence, but has also become a place of public performance and desire, a kind of theatre where people want to find out and claim their identity. In this sense, family history has perhaps become something else – family memorialisation or self-imagining – and perhaps the archive has become something else too. As such, this study is part of this new exploration of identity and archivization, and has something to contribute to the development of the history of archives, archival theory and historiography.²⁵

What little research on genealogy that has been done within the field of information studies has been focussed on service provision. In recent years, new research has been undertaken into the genealogical use of online sources. Kate Friday, based at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen is currently investigating genealogical uses of the Internet with the aim of improving local library services.²⁶ Kylie H. Veale is carrying out similar research at the Curtin University of Technology, Australia.²⁷ By comparison, my research is not a detailed survey of information needs and the use of online tools; rather, it aims to provide a historical background and an analysis of genealogical practice and discourse. As such, this thesis is more concerned with theoretical questions such as, what is the meaning of family history and genealogy? How does it provide a sense of identity, how is it articulated and how has it developed? What factors drive or shape genealogical discourse?

Whilst analysis of genealogy is thin on the ground within the field of information studies, it has received some attention in other fields, such as sociology, anthropology and human geography. In 1991 the sociologist Michael Erben argued that detailed comparison of migrant genealogies would enhance the sociology of migration, and that genealogical sources could be used to research family intimacy, kinship structures, “local patterns of family activity” and “local inheritance customs”.²⁸ Erben also noted that “genealogies are a key ideological component of most cultures”.²⁹ Building upon the potential sociological

²⁴ Hugh A. Taylor, 'The Collective Memory: Archives and Libraries as Heritage', *Archivaria*, 15 (1982), 118-30, p. 123.

²⁵ The term ‘archivization’ is taken from Jacques Derrida, who argues that “archivization produces as much as it records the event.” Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 17.

²⁶ Kate Friday, *Researching e-genealogy*, (<<http://www.researchingegenealogy.co.uk/>> [accessed 28 September 2007].

²⁷ Kylie H. Veale, 'A Doctoral Study of the Use of the Internet for Genealogy', *Historia Actual On-Line*, 7 (2005), 7-14, <<http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=1210321>> [accessed 10 October 2007].

²⁸ Michael Erben, 'Genealogy and Sociology: A Preliminary Set of Statements and Speculations', *Sociology*, 25:2 (1991), 275-92, p. 289.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.281.

areas of research highlighted by Erben, the Canadian sociologist Ronald D. Lambert has examined the motivations of Ontario Genealogical Society and other genealogical groups.³⁰ From this he has drawn valuable conclusions about these societies' understandings of time, mortality and the social construction of memory.³¹

More recently, Dallen J. Timothy and Jeanne Kay Guelke's *Geography and Genealogy: locating personal pasts* (2008) offers a series of essays investigating the contribution that geography can make to genealogy, as well as essays investigating genealogy as a cultural practice from the point of view of tourism, genetics and religion. Their justification for investigating family history is that it "in practice both illuminates and subverts key areas of interest, such as identity, landscapes of memory, and gate-keeping of knowledge" and, as such, can contribute not only to human geography but also to "allied aspects of history and cognate social sciences."³² Similarly, the human geographer Catherine Nash describes genealogy as "a practice through which ideas of personal, familial, collective, ethnic, and sometimes national senses of culture, location, and identity are shaped, imagined, articulated, and enacted."³³ These broad interests of identity, memory and knowledge are ones that cross disciplinary boundaries. Accordingly, they call for the sort of interdisciplinary approach which has been adopted in this study.

Timothy and Guelke investigate how genealogy can contribute to the study of geography, however, rather than study genealogy as a supplement to an academic discipline I seek to explore genealogy on its own terms. This is not to say that this study has nothing to contribute to other topics of research. The development of genealogy, for example, cannot be considered without paying attention to the peculiarly "heritage hungry" diasporas.³⁴ As will be outlined in Chapter Two, genealogy was popular in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. The American diaspora had, and still has, a significant influence upon British genealogy, from the influence of the narrative memoir and

³⁰ Ronald D. Lambert, 'A Profile of the Membership of the Ontario Genealogical Society', *Families*, 34:2 (1995), 73-80; Ronald D. Lambert, 'Looking for Genealogical Motivation', *Families*, 34:3 (1995), 149-60; Ronald D. Lambert, 'Becoming a Family Historian', *Families*, 34:4 (1995), 223-32; Ronald D. Lambert, 'Doing Family History', *Families*, 35:1 (1996), 11-25.

³¹ Ronald D. Lambert, 'The Family Historian and Temporal Orientations Towards the Ancestral Past', *Time & Society*, 5:2 (1996), 115-43; Ronald D. Lambert, 'Constructing Symbolic Ancestry: Befriending Time, Confronting Death', *Omega*, 46:4 (2003), 303-21; Ronald D. Lambert, 'Descriptive, narrative, and experiential pathways to symbolic ancestors', *Mortality*, 11:4 (2006), 317-35.

³² Dallen J. Timothy and Jeanne Kay Guelke, *Geography and genealogy: locating personal pasts* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 1.

³³ Catherine Nash, 'Genealogical Identities', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 20 (2002), 27-52, p. 28.

³⁴ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 9.

correspondence between antiquarian societies, to the vast work of the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU) which is fuelled by the doctrinal beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). As such, my thesis also contributes to Timothy and Guelke's analysis of family history within the context of tourism, genetics and religion.

Yet aside from reference to the beliefs of the Mormons and post-First World War spiritualism, there is not enough scope within this thesis to fully explore the connection between religion and genealogy. Within the Judeo-Christian culture the most famous genealogies are the lists of 'begats' in the Bible and Torah. More research could be carried out into the theological implications of genealogy and the notion of spiritual birth and the family of God. The importance of genealogy and memorialisation to Jews in particular would be a fruitful area of research.³⁵ Such research would provide a useful counterpoint to the notion of the 'second birth' of the citizen through civil registration, and the idea of the national 'family', which I refer to in Chapters Two and Three of my thesis.

While I briefly explore the influence of the American diaspora, more research could be carried out into this and other diasporan influences. In particular, there is scope to comparatively analyse the English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish diasporas and their genealogical activities and notions of identity in more detail. In the field of cultural and human geography some work has already been completed on Irish and Scottish diasporan identity. Susan Kelly and Stephen Morton have investigated the commemoration of Irish immigration through an analysis of the sculpture of Irishwoman Annie Moore, who aged fifteen was the first immigrant to America to be processed through Ellis Island. They argue that such commemoration represents a form of "archivization", a process which has in turn produced an "exemplary US citizen."³⁶ Recently, Nash has published an investigation of what it means to be of Irish descent, which explores contemporary notions of nationality, diasporan identity, ancestry and belonging.³⁷ In a similar fashion, the anthropologist, Paul

³⁵ Donald H. Akenson, *Some Family: The Mormons and How Humanity Keeps Track of Itself* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007); Howard Wimberley and Joel Savishinsky, 'Ancestor Memorialism: A Comparison of Jews and Japanese', in *Community, Self, and Identity*, ed. by Bhabagrahi Misra and James Preston (The Hague: Mouton, 1978), pp. 115-31.

³⁶ Susan Kelly and Stephen Morton, 'Annie Moore and the archives of displacement: towards an immigrant history of the present', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5:4 (2004), 633-50, p. 647.

³⁷ Catherine Nash, *Of Irish Descent: Origin Stories, Genealogy & the Politics of Belonging* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008).

Basu has investigated the role of genealogy and the construction of identity within Scottish heritage tourism.³⁸

Others have taken a more practical approach to analysing genealogical tourism. In 1980 Taylor called for small pilot collaborative projects between the tourist industry, government tourist departments and cultural institutions. He suggested that provincial museums, archives, historical and heritage societies could work together to provide richer local genealogical services, such as tourist maps and local tours.³⁹ Some have focussed on the economic affects of online genealogical sources upon tourism. Emily Heinlen draws a causal line between the increased accessibility of online genealogical sources and a decline in 'real' visits to genealogical heritage centres in Ireland. However, in doing so she overlooks other significant and complex factors that have affected trans-Atlantic tourism, most importantly, 9/11.⁴⁰ My thesis contributes to these studies of genealogical tourism at a more theoretical level by investigating genealogy as theatre of self-identity, which can be seen as a significant touristic mode of engaging with the past.

Whilst this study does investigate the genealogical imagination within British culture, it also takes a historical approach by treating genealogy itself as a historically contingent object.⁴¹ This enriches work already done in this area. In addition to the historian-genealogist Sir Anthony Richard Wagner's pioneering historical overview,⁴² Simon Titley-Bayes' doctoral research is a historical analysis of genealogy in the post-Second World War period. Building upon Lambert's research, he interprets family history as a way of

³⁸ Paul Basu, 'Sites of memory - Sources of identity: landscape-narrative of the Sutherland Clearances', in *Townships to farmsteads: rural settlement studies in Scotland, England and Wales*, ed. by John A. Atkinson, Iain Banks, and Gavin MacGregor (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2000), pp. 225-36; Paul Basu, 'Hunting Down Home: Reflections on Homeland and the Search for Identity in the Scottish Diaspora', in *Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place*, ed. by B Bender and M. Winer (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 333-48; Paul Basu, 'Route metaphors of 'roots-tourism' in the Scottish Highland diaspora', in *Reframing pilgrimage: cultures in motion*, ed. by Simon Coleman, John Eade, and European Association of Social Anthropologists. (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 150-74; Paul Basu, 'My Own Island Home: The Orkney Homecoming', *Journal of Material Culture*, 9:1 (2004), 27-42 ; Paul Basu, 'Macpherson Country: genealogical identities, spatial histories and the Scottish diasporic clanscape', *Cultural Geographies*, 12 (2005), 123-50; Paul Basu, 'Roots tourism as return movement: semantics and the Scottish diaspora', in *Emigrant homecomings: the return of movement of emigrants, 1600-2000*, ed. by M. Harper (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 131-50; Paul Basu, *Highland homecomings: genealogy and heritage tourism in the Scottish diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2007).

³⁹ Hugh A. Taylor, 'Family History: Some new directions and their implications for the archivist', *Archivaria*, 11 (1980-81), 228-31, pp. 230-31.

⁴⁰ Emily Heinlen, 'Genealogy and the economic drain on Ireland: Unintended consequences', *First Monday*, 12:1 (2007), 1-12, <http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue12_1/heinlen/index.html> [accessed 24 January 2007].

⁴¹ Martin Saar, 'Genealogy and Subjectivity', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 10 (2002), 231- 45.

⁴² 'The Study and Literature of Genealogy', Anthony Wagner, *English Genealogy*. 3rd edn (Chichester: Phillimore, 1983), pp. 351-407.

dealing with mortality and explores the connections between religious and spiritual belief and family history. My work is also historical, but it differs from Titley-Bayes' approach in that I investigate the archivization of genealogical knowledge before 1945 in order to explain its connections with antiquarianism.⁴³ Such an investigation is a fruitful exercise, if an uncomfortable one, because it has also forced me to consider the relationship between eugenics and genealogy. Yet it is a necessary avenue of research, especially if one is to understand the role of recording technology and science in the development of genealogical practice, new developments such as DNA-genealogy and the discourses of race and national belonging.

However, my approach is not completely historical. This thesis is focussed upon the enactment of genealogy within the archival space and its articulation and mediation. Rather than interpreting genealogical activity first and foremost as a branch of history, I analyse genealogy as a form of semi-autobiographical narrative about the self. Instead of viewing the use of archives primarily as a marker of historical scholarship, I investigate the archive as a shared space or horizon in which stories about the self and one's descent are enacted, a theatrical space in which the 'narratability' of the self and of others is exposed. In turn, I take this process to be historically contingent and culturally defined. The shared space of the archive could be domestic or public and national, real or virtual. As such, I interpret genealogy primarily as a historically and culturally-grounded practice of semi-autobiographical storytelling which has its own temporal orientation which is operated through a sense of familial and generational time. It is in this sense that this work is an investigation of the archive as a 'theatre of self-identity.'

My thesis is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter provides in John R. Gillis' terms, a 'heritagraphical', overview of genealogical knowledge.⁴⁴ It seeks to establish what 'genealogy' is by outlining how various terms have been used to describe different kinds of genealogical activity within Britain. These include a discussion of 'antiquarianism', 'family history', 'personal heritage' and 'DNA genealogy'. Most critical analyses of genealogy, such as Timothy and Guelke's, dismiss genealogical activity before the Second World War on the grounds that it was principally concerned with the compilation of pedigrees and the transmission of property and title.⁴⁵ This earlier genealogy is typically

⁴³ Simon Titley-Bayes, 'Family History in England, c. 1945 - 2006: Culture, Identity and (Im)mortality' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2006).

⁴⁴ John R. Gillis, 'Heritage and History: Twins Separated at Birth', *Reviews in American History*, 25:3 (1997), 375-78.

⁴⁵ Timothy and Guelke, *Geography and genealogy: locating personal pasts*, p. 5.

contrasted with the ‘new’ post-Second World War genealogy or ‘family history’ which is linked with developments in social and economic history and is characterized as possessing a broader interest in the wider context in which one’s ancestors lived.⁴⁶ Yet this interpretation is grossly simplified and overlooks the fact that genealogy is a diverse cultural practice that has its own history, its own historical agents and situated communities. This chapter argues that the pre-war history of genealogy is worth investigating and that such an investigation enriches our understanding of the history of British archives and historiography.

The second chapter, entitled the ‘Archivization of Genealogical Knowledge’, switches from a ‘heritagaphical’ to a historical approach. I investigate the circulation of genealogical knowledge between various bodies through the archival and recordkeeping practices that emerged in Britain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Firstly, I explore the production, consumption and circulation of genealogical knowledge in the public sphere of antiquarian print culture. This section demonstrates that genealogical practice and the development of British archives are interdependent. Secondly, I discuss genealogy as gendered activity which is associated with the feminine sphere of the home and family. Thirdly, I offer an analysis of the mapping of the private body to the national, social body, which was achieved through the utilitarian discourses of eugenics, statistics and photography. I interpret this as a move which contributed to the development of both national archives through civil registration, and to the development of domestic archives, such as family photograph albums. I also discuss how the notion of biological heredity became more widespread and the body in terms of eugenics – and later genetics – was framed as a kind of immutable archive. Finally, in this chapter I investigate the influence of the American diaspora upon the production and consumption of British genealogical knowledge. I argue that this period to some extent anticipates some of the features of current genealogical discourse. This chapter provides a contextual foundation for the analyses of identification narratives in the third chapter.

The third chapter, entitled ‘Narrating the Genealogical Self’, takes a more theoretical turn. It develops the metaphor of the archive as a theatre of genealogical identification. In doing so, ‘the archive’ is expanded to not only include the traditional notion of an institutional repository of written documentary sources, but also more recent conceptions of the archive as a body of immutable biological code, as the consignment of unique hidden traces, or as the compilation of autobiographical memory. Firstly, a theoretical outline of narrative in

⁴⁶ Samuel P. Hays, *American Political History as Social Analysis* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980), pp. 406-15.

relation to genealogy is introduced. This draws upon the theories of Paul Ricoeur, Adriana Cavarero, Hannah Arendt and David Carr. In the rest of the chapter I develop the analysis by focussing on several genealogical texts. The first text is a privately published book that resembles a printed archive of private family papers, letters and memoirs. Entitled, *A Family Record*, this work was published by Lady Wemyss in memory of her two sons who died in the First World War. Works such as this can be seen as a continuation of the Victorian family memoir and as part of a tradition of feminine memorialisation. The second text is Alex Haley's *Roots* which is broadly accepted as the most influential text of 1970s post-war, 'new' genealogy. The significance of *Roots* was that it offered a different cultural genealogy for black Britons and Americans and provided a blueprint for the modern epic tale of genealogical research. Whilst genealogically and historically inaccurate, *Roots*, I argue, was metaphorically genealogical in that it had the power to "father-forth" and reconfigure people's lives.⁴⁷ The other texts are taken from television and online media which were in turn influenced by *Roots*. These include the popular BBC television series, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, which is generally credited with contributing to the recent upsurge in British genealogical activity, and *Motherland: A Genetic Journey* which traces the story of several British people in search of their African heritage. Throughout these texts, individual narratives – the story of 'who' – is examined in relation to master-narratives of war, slavery, the Holocaust, migration and homecoming, and special attention is paid to the use of archives in the construction of such storytelling.

I conclude the thesis by arguing that genealogy can represent a desire for semi-autobiographical narrative which includes archives as necessary evidentiary 'other witnesses' or traces, through which the self is publicly revealed as both a unified self and as a 'unique existent'. This is how archives show us who we are. In this way, my thesis demonstrates that archives have another function than that of providing tangible evidence of business transactions; they have an ontological function of being necessary 'other' evidentiary witnesses, revealing the narratability of who we are as unique historical beings who, nevertheless, do not stand alone. The definition and interpretation of the archive, its redundancy and fragmentary nature, in this way has both philosophical and political import.

As described, the thesis employs an interdisciplinary approach and as such shifts in focus between each chapter, from a 'heritagographical', to historical, to a more theoretical and critical examination of genealogical texts. More research could be done employing just one

⁴⁷ Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*. 1985 edn (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 138.

of these approaches. However, this structure was chosen to firstly establish genealogical study in relation to other disciplines, secondly, to show the historical relationship between British genealogical practice and different types of archivization and thirdly, to demonstrate the nuanced and pervasive aspects of genealogical research, its role in national identity, the existential groundings for archives, why we keep them, how they are related to our sense of identity, the social role of archives, and the exploration of what archivization could mean beyond the institutional to the personal and familial. I believe such research is pertinent in an age when technology is changing not only how we archive, but also, in light of genetics, how we reproduce. As such I hope that my thesis will contribute to the ongoing debate on what makes us, and how we know, who we are.

Chapter One: Heritagraphy

Is genealogy simply another form of writing history? To what extent is it historiographical? Historiography can simply be defined as the study of written history, but, as will be shown, genealogy has an ambivalent relationship to the academic tradition of writing history and is perhaps better viewed as part of a more general engagement with the past. By virtue of its popularity and its interconnections with tourism and mass media, current genealogical practice can be seen as part of the heritage sector. In a review of David Lowenthal's works on heritage, Gillis called for an academic course in "heritagraphy" to sit as a twin object of study alongside historiography.⁴⁸ Based on Lowenthal's writings, heritagraphy would examine the uses and development of heritage. In a similar vein, Tucker has described the history of genealogy as the "other historiography" in that it has, to a large extent, remained uncharted.⁴⁹ Genealogy is not parallel to history, neither is it a discrete 'other', but it could be considered as a mode within a broader "social circulation of the past."⁵⁰ In this way it could be considered as a genre, where 'genre' is not used in a purely classificatory sense but is seen as a "class of communicative events" which has developed within certain communities, "the members of which share some kind of set of communicative purposes."⁵¹ This emphasis on events, persons and purposes, highlights the historically contingent and varied nature of the development of the genealogical genre. Yet to even refer to 'the genealogical genre' is to simplify its complexity, as there are different and overlapping communities and sets of communicative purposes which are reflected in the various terms 'antiquarianism', 'genealogy', 'family history', 'DNA-genealogy' and 'personal heritage'. This chapter seeks to chart the contexts for these differences in terminology, showing how they are related and where they differ.

So, what is genealogy? The word is derived from the Greek terms, 'genea' meaning race, and 'logos', meaning discourse.⁵² Daniel R. Woolf, in his historiographical study from 1500 to 1730, defines genealogy as "the deliberate compilation for specifically *historical*

⁴⁸ Gillis, 'Heritage and History: Twins Separated at Birth', p. 378.

⁴⁹ Susan Tucker acknowledges her debt for this term to François Menant, see Tucker, 'Doors Opening Wider: Library and Archival Services to Family History', p. 155.

⁵⁰ Daniel R. Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁵¹ John M. Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 58.

⁵² 'genealogy', in *The Chambers Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrup Publishers, 2001), p. 666.

purposes of an authentic, or at least authenticatable, family descent.”⁵³ (his emphasis). This he views as distinct from a pedigree, which refers both to “the literal record as found in family archives and recorded by heralds, and also the theoretically espoused lineage asserted by some contemporaries without reference to written documents.”⁵⁴ Yet it is generally traditional to regard genealogists and the term ‘genealogy’ as mainly concerned with the compilation of genealogical ‘trees’ or pedigrees. This is because ‘genealogy’ is typically contrasted with ‘family history’. In comparison with genealogy, ‘family history’ has broader associations and is perhaps more concerned with ‘fleshing-out’ the bare genealogical data of names, dates and relationships through more in-depth research into the social context in which ancestors lived. Timothy and Guelke define ‘genealogy’ as the “construction of family pedigrees: lists of ancestors and descendants.” In contrast, family history “includes genealogy, but also supplementary information about ancestors’ lives and contexts.”⁵⁵ As such, Woolf’s definition of ‘genealogy’ overlaps with Timothy and Guelke’s definition of ‘family history’, whilst his definition of ‘pedigree’ overlaps with their definition of ‘genealogy’. In turn, Taylor goes further than Timothy and Guelke to argue that ‘family history’ also encompasses existential imagination and desire, and something akin to Paxman’s sense of personal connection:

...in its fullest sense [family history] may become a positive social therapy of compelling, deeply satisfying power as we seek to resolve our place in the scheme of things. This is the history which we must perceive for ourselves and experience if it is to be authentic. We must exercise our informed imagination and be prepared for frustration and disappointment in the course of our pursuit.⁵⁶

For some, ‘genealogy’ is seen as historiographical, the “deliberate compilation for specifically *historical* purposes”, but for others ‘family history’ is more historiographical

⁵³ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, p. 87 n.50.

⁵⁴ Ibid. The term ‘pedigree’, derived from the French phrase *pied de grue*, ‘crane’s-foot’, stands for the abstract ordering of succession and, while mostly used in reference to lines of human genealogical descent, the term is not solely applicable to genealogy. ‘Pedigree’ has also been used to refer to other lineage patterns, such as the succession of Bishops. In certain disciplines, ‘pedigree’ and ‘lineage’ are defined according to the distinction between animals and humans. Donald Akenson points out that within the disciplines of genetics, demography and anthropology, the term, ‘lineage’, is used instead of ‘pedigree’ to distinguish human breeding from the controlled breeding programmes of animals. However, ‘pedigree’ and ‘lineage’ have both been indiscriminately employed to refer to both human and animal lines of ascent or descent. In an era of greater biological technology, the extent to which human breeding differs from animal breeding is also not so clearly demarcated and, in this respect, the distinction between pedigree and lineage breaks down. Therefore, ‘lineage’ and ‘pedigree’ will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis. Akenson, *Some Family: The Mormons and How Humanity Keeps Track of Itself*, p. 88; Sarah Franklin, *Dolly Mixtures: The Remaking of Genealogy* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁵⁵ Timothy and Guelke, *Geography and genealogy: locating personal pasts*, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Taylor, ‘Family History: Some new directions and their implications for the archivist’, p. 228.

than ‘genealogy’ because it studies “lives and contexts” and involves “a knowledge and understanding of social history and material culture.”⁵⁷ However, both ‘family history’ and ‘genealogy’ can encompass a personal aspect which is more philosophical and existential than historiographical, as Arthur J. Willis wrote in his beginner’s guide: “I look on genealogy as something more than merely obtaining proof of descent; it is to me an attempt to answer the question ‘Can these bones live?’.”⁵⁸ Thus I will use both terms interchangeably. This overlapping of terminology highlights genealogy’s ambivalent historiographical status and the various different motivations, methodologies and purposes evident within this broader engagement with the ‘past’. It is partly for this reason that the interdisciplinary approach of this thesis was employed, so that it could tease out these different purposes and the richness of this particular mode of engagement.

The differences in definition can to some extent be explained by historical context. In particular, ‘family history’ is associated with post-Second World War developments. Raphael Samuel argues that from the 1960s onwards there has been a more general and pervasive “historicist turn in national life”.⁵⁹ Interpreting family history as a type of do-it-yourself history, he lumps it together with other types of interest in the past, which he terms “resurrectionism.” This, Samuel views as a type of nostalgic heritage which ranges from the environmental campaigns and New Age beliefs in the ancientness of the land, to the historicisation of towns and urban conservation. All of which, he argues, stems from a “vertiginous sense of disappearing worlds.”⁶⁰ Significantly, Samuel characterizes family history as uncharted, describing it as “one of the most striking discoveries of the 1960s” that “started literally on the doorstep and owed nothing to outside influence.”⁶¹ But, was it really a “startling discovery”?⁶² Did it really just turn up from nowhere as a self-contained phenomenon? Samuel’s “resurrectionist” family history is often seen as a product of post-war modernity, and while Samuel celebrates the historical turn in popular culture, it is significant that he views family history almost as an abandoned child that suddenly appeared on the academic doorstep; whether called ‘family history’, ‘genealogy’ or ‘personal heritage’, academic historians are reluctant to fully adopt genealogical endeavour as their own.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.229.

⁵⁸ Arthur J. Willis, *Genealogy for Beginners*. 2nd edn (London: Phillimore, 1970), p. 12.

⁵⁹ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture vol. 1*. (London: Verso, 1994), pp.139, 146

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.150.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.148.

⁶² Ibid., p.19.

During the welcome speech to the 2007 conference, *History and the Public*, David Bates, then at the Institute of Historical Research warned that, despite family history's popularity and importance for the construction of identity, one should not forget that it is also "the methodological basis of genocide."⁶³ Similarly, Tristram Hunt described the presence of family history on television as the "nemesis of social history."⁶⁴ He dismissed the popular programme, *Who Do You Think You Are?* as tear-jerking, "identity-driven history" neatly summed up by Bill Oddie's comment in the first episode that, "It's self-help." The charge against current forms of genealogical practice appears to rest on several assumptions and arguments. In brief, genealogy is accused of being consumerist, narcissistic, emotional and personal, that it has a historical association with the superseded eugenics movement, and that it has the antiquarian tendency to be myopic, amateur and parochial. This criticism reveals a generic conflict between different genealogical practices and history, tensions which I will explore as we proceed.

The accusation of antiquarianism is partly a result of the professionalization of history itself. During the nineteenth century, historians began to appropriate the field of the antiquarian, thereby denuding antiquarianism of its historical, geographical, philological and archaeological content. Genealogy failed to be promoted to the ranks of new historical study and it appears to have been cast-off with antiquarianism, dismissed as "the husk of pedantry, tedious minutiae and a futile accumulation of the detritus of the past."⁶⁵ It also goes some way to explain the invisibility of genealogy within historiography. From the nineteenth century onwards, the antiquarian has figured as an undisciplined dilettante and the term itself is still often synonymous with amateurism.⁶⁶ In his essay, 'On the Utility and Liability of History for Life' (1874), Friedrich Nietzsche contended that what he termed "antiquarian history" lacked critical and analytical sense. According to Nietzsche, the antiquarian historical mode was one in which the scholarly habit lives without piety and without any reference to the present, in which it "revolves with self-satisfied egotism around its own axis", developing a pathological "blind mania to collect, of a restless gathering together of everything that once existed." Knowing only how to preserve life rather than create it, the antiquarian views "everything to be equally important, and

⁶³ David Bates, 'Welcome Speech', *History and the Public*, Swansea University (Wales), 12 - 14 April 2007 (unpublished conference paper: Swansea University (Wales), 12 April 2007).

⁶⁴ Tristram Hunt, 'Plenary 3: Social History and Television', *History and the Public*, Swansea University (Wales), 12 - 14 April 2007 (unpublished conference paper: Swansea University (Wales), 13 April 2007).

⁶⁵ Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), p. 348.

⁶⁶ Susan A. Crane, 'Story, history and the passionate collector', in *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice, 1700-1850*, ed. by Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 187-203, p. 187.

consequently the individual thing to be too important.” In what Nietzsche characterized as a kind of blind nostalgia, the antiquarian finally “sinks so low that in the end he is satisfied with any fare and even devours with gusto the dust of biographical minutiae.”⁶⁷ This lively description accords with the antiquarian stereotype, the oft-cited and pilloried caricature, Jonathan Oldbuck, created by Sir Walter Scott in *The Antiquary*. As a scholar of antiquarianism, Rosemary Sweet writes: “it has often proved difficult to penetrate beyond the image of Jonathan Oldbuck, inhabiting a chaotic study, crammed full of objects of dubious authenticity, festooned with cobwebs.”⁶⁸

When antiquarianism is reappraised it tends to be interpreted as the seedbed of those current historical professions which are concerned with material culture – art history, topography, archaeology and the collecting practices of museums, libraries and archives. Consequently, most analyses of antiquarianism chart the shift from the elite, idiosyncratic and personal collecting practices of the antiquarian to the nationalist, collective and representative practices of the heritage professional.⁶⁹ One such scholar whose work confirms this trajectory is Philippa Levine who describes the professionalization of three groups within the Victorian period: antiquarians, historians and archaeologists. For her, the modern professional counterpart to the antiquarian is the museum curator, the archivist or the librarian. Whilst she recognizes the common interests and origins of antiquarians, historians and archaeologists, she nonetheless treats each as distinct entities, each of which became gradually distinguished through academic discipline and professional status.⁷⁰ Genealogy or family history, however, is not identified as one of the antiquarians’ nascent professionalisms.

In Levine’s effort to rescue antiquarianism by linking it with the respectability of the heritage professionals, those who are often still considered to be amateur, such as genealogists, have been ignored. The professional/amateur dichotomy has plagued genealogy and it is perhaps for this reason that genealogy has been overlooked by the academic world. The Society of Genealogists was not established in Britain until 1911 and it was not until the latter half of the twentieth century that British genealogical practice achieved some level of professional and academic respectability. Consequently, this thesis

⁶⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘On the Utility and Liability of History for Life’, in *The Nietzsche Reader*, ed. by Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 124-41, p. 137.

⁶⁸ Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, p. xiii.

⁶⁹ Crane, ‘Story, history and the passionate collector’, p. 187.

⁷⁰ Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

is concerned with a practice and genre that from the general point of view of the professional academic historian, has been – and is still considered to be – predominately amateur, in the worst sense. But what is meant by ‘professional’? There are examples of genealogists who have been paid to undertake work on behalf of others, who were dependent on this work for their living, who worked according to professional ethics, and who no doubt developed exacting and thorough research techniques. These professionals, however, often worked independently and in competition with each other – including some who did not have such exacting standards. Because of this, Wagner argues that these professionals were reluctant to share methods and findings, thereby making it hard to track innovations in the development of genealogy as a discipline – particularly during the Victorian and Edwardian periods.⁷¹

Yet significantly, genealogy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was seen as a branch of historical study. This was certainly the view of the renowned historian John Horace Round, for whom genealogy, and in particular, feudal genealogy was the subject upon which his own erudite and disciplined reputation was based.⁷² Whilst Round characterized his branch of work as modern and new, and distinctly historical, he nevertheless saw his work as being descended from the earlier genealogical work of the antiquarian heralds. Both Round and Wagner trace the origins of “modern scientific genealogy” to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when studying and collecting relics of the past struggled to become more of an organised social affair.⁷³

The discipline of history to some extent also claims descent from the sixteenth and seventeenth-century antiquarian heralds. Woolf argues that the distinction between amateur and professional has shaped the historiography of antiquarianism which has focused on a small group of highly-educated heralds, who are depicted as pivotal players on the way towards the gradual and slow establishment of the historical discipline.⁷⁴ In this way, the history of antiquarianism has been coloured by the lens of late nineteenth-century historiography, when the historical discipline itself was becoming an established profession. Attention has been focussed on the heralds because they were considered to be “the closest approximation to professional antiquaries, given that their business lay in

⁷¹ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 400.

⁷² John Horace Round, 'Historical Genealogy', in *Family Origins and Other Studies*, ed. by William Page (London: Constable, 1930), pp. 1-12.

⁷³ John Horace Round, *Family Origins and Other Studies*. ed. by William Page (London: Constable, 1930), p. 4; Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.99.

validating the right to bear arms and in tracing lines of familial descent.”⁷⁵ Whilst figures such as Sir William Dugdale (1605-86) and Sir William Camden (1551-1623), no doubt played a highly influential part in the development of historical method – and significantly were paid for undertaking historical-genealogical research – the story that historical practice gradually improved through the concerted effort of a few is too simple and belies the breadth of engagement with the past in general. This engagement included a wider involvement in various genealogical and historical activities, not only on behalf of the heralds but also of the families that they were studying and amongst other sectors of society.⁷⁶

It is beyond the scope of this study to trace the full breadth of antiquarian and genealogical knowledge through the sixteenth to the seventeenth or even eighteenth centuries, and it would be needless because Woolf and Sweet have already begun to do so – although there is no doubt more work to be done in this area.⁷⁷ Instead, I will draw upon the history of genealogy within antiquarianism in order to provide a historical background for the social circulation of genealogy during the nineteenth century. This is done, not only to provide a context for contemporary ‘new antiquarianism’ or ‘personal heritage’, which will be outlined in this chapter, but also to enrich the history of British archival provision described in Chapter Two.

My focus on the nineteenth-century is also intended to counter-balance the historiography of the professionalization of history. Whilst Woolf recognises the breadth of the social circulation of genealogical materials and the importance of the “availability of multiple sources of information and their free transmission from one interested individual to another” for the development of genealogical and biographical research “all the way up to the Harleian Society, the *Victoria County Histories* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*”, he nevertheless sees genealogy as being relegated to sidelines with “the Debretts and Burkes of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries”, cut off and less important to the mainstream of antiquarianism which was based on the visible and tangible “architectural and natural remains of the past.”⁷⁸ Consequently, his study ends in 1730. Whilst genealogical publications and societies did develop along distinctive and somewhat separate lines, this thesis holds the opposite view. I argue in Chapter Two that such activity, particularly in the latter half of the nineteenth century, signals a groundswell of

⁷⁵ Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, p. 48.

⁷⁶ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, p. 99.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.73-140.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.120, 137.

genealogical interest and imagination continuous within the antiquarian tradition, rather than a cutting or a branching off into insignificance. It is the intention within the next chapter to uncover some of this history, particularly the part that contributed to the development of archives and domestic archivization.

However, before doing so, an outline of British genealogy is needed. The next section presents an overview of Round's work in its relation to the nascent historical profession of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The development of genealogy within antiquarianism from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries will be described briefly, followed by an investigation of the development of the county history and genealogical reference work during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which leads into a discussion of genealogy and class. Then family history and the second 'new genealogy' will be outlined, to be followed by an analysis of DNA genealogy, personal heritage and new antiquarianism. This chapter concludes with the claim that the pre-Second-World-War history of genealogy is worthy of investigation; genealogy is a diverse cultural practice with its own history, historical agents and situated communities.

John Horace Round's 'new genealogy'

Whilst the historical profession was being established in the late nineteenth-century, antiquarianism was not initially dismissed; it too – through its various branches of archaeology, topography, architectural history, folklore and genealogy – was being renewed along modern critical lines. In 1902 the heraldry expert and founder of the magazine *Ancestor*, Oswald Barron summed up this position when he wrote that:

The beginning of a new century sees the antiquary abroad. The antiquary as the early nineteenth century knew him, a fusty person enamoured of fustiness, lingers in our dark places, but the new school of English archaeology, building fact upon the sure foundation of fact and adding daily to the mass of our knowledge of the past of our race, is up and doing with a more reasonable enthusiasm. Architect antiquaries are telling every stone of our ancient houses and churches; topographer antiquaries are writing the history of the land to the twelve inch scale; folk-lore antiquaries are garnering in what remains of old English custom and tradition; genealogist antiquaries are hewing with critical axes amongst the stately family trees, under whose shade their forerunners were content to walk reverently.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Oswald Barron, 'Heraldry Revived', *The Ancestor: A Quarterly Review of County and Family History, Heraldry and Antiques* 1:1 (1902), 36-57, p. 36.

Within Britain, the most significant figure wielding the new critical axe of genealogy was John Horace Round (1854-1928). Round is widely credited with establishing genealogy as a branch of study within the nascent professional and critical school of history. In 1954, L.G. Pine wrote that Round had saved genealogy from being the mere “preserve of the retired sea captain or army officer, or of the spinster aunt.”⁸⁰ Similarly, Wagner describes him as “a potent influence in raising critical standards.”⁸¹

Round who specialized in the Anglo-Norman period had studied at Balliol College, Oxford, under the supervision of Bishop William Stubbs (1825-1901), himself a keen genealogist who used the Duchy of Lancaster Court Rolls of the Forest of Knaresborough to trace his ancestry through sixteen generations to 1359.⁸² As regius professor of history, Stubbs oversaw the expansion and consolidation of modern history at Oxford, where it became established as an independent degree in 1872, and was greatly influenced by the new brand of German source-based historical scholarship pioneered by Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886). Round was part of a new generation of professional historians personally taught by Stubbs, including Sir Charles H. Firth (1857-1936), Reginald L. Poole (1857-1939), and Thomas F. Tout (1855-1929), who all left a distinctive mark on the development of the discipline.

The foundation of the *English Historical Review* in 1886 was another sign that history in Britain was becoming an area of expertise. Described by Levine as “the voice of the new professionals”, the *English Historical Review*’s “chief care” was the trained student of history.⁸³ Its aim was to educate and raise the standard of history to the level set by the German-style archival scholarship; accordingly, the first article in the first edition was “German Schools of History” by Lord Acton (1834-1902).⁸⁴ Round was a regular contributor to the *English Historical Review*, publishing over one hundred articles in the journal between 1886 and 1928. Although a specialist in genealogical matters he was

⁸⁰ L. G. Pine, 'Historians Reconsidered XII: J. H. Round', *History Today*, 4:5 (1954), 338-44, p. 338.

⁸¹ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 393.

⁸² James Campbell, 'Stubbs, William (1825-1901)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36362>> [accessed 17 January 2008]; William Stubbs, *Genealogical history of the family of the late Bishop William Stubbs*. ed. by Francis Collins, *Record series (Yorkshire Archaeological Society)* ([Leeds]: Printed for the Society [by J. Whitehead and Son], 1915); Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 401.

⁸³ 'Prefatory Note', *English Historical Review*, 1 (1886), 1-6, p. 5; Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886*, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Lord Acton, 'German Schools of History', *English Historical Review*, 1 (1886), 7-42.

treated as a professional historian and was considered to be part of, what Doris Goldstein terms, the “community of the competent.”⁸⁵

In a lecture entitled ‘Historical Genealogy’, presented as part of the International Congress of Historical Studies in London in April 1913, Round argued that genealogy could be interpreted in three ways: firstly, as a branch of historical study; secondly, as a discipline that is based on the same principles as those of historical research; and thirdly, as a discipline that has its own historical development.⁸⁶ My research partly follows this interpretation, demonstrating genealogy’s own historical development by exploring its links with antiquarianism. However, Round sought to distance his work from antiquarianism. In particular, he tried to rid genealogy of the antiquarian taints of romanticism and falsehood. Round described his work as heralding a modern age of “new genealogy.” In contrast to the ‘old’ genealogy of the College of Arms that was “teeming with fiction and with error”, this new genealogy was distinguished by its scientific and modern methodology:

The studies...are intended to illustrate that new genealogy which is of comparatively recent growth, and to stimulate the movement for honesty and truth in peerage and family history...If it is conducted on the right lines, that is, on the modern system, such research is wholly praiseworthy, and is no way liable to the taunts levelled against that older genealogy which consisted either in inventing pedigrees or in repeating without question the unsupported statements of a herald.⁸⁷

In this way, historical truth and accuracy – enabled through a disciplined and vigorous interrogation of archival sources – was pitted against fiction, legend and the romanticism of the past; the type of partial (in both senses of the term) history practiced by the old antiquarians and heralds.

The ‘old’ genealogy of the College of Arms that Round refers to was developed in the early modern period, partly in response to a growing and increasingly self-conscious gentry-class. Throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, heraldic and genealogical interests were fuelled by political and religious instability. In what has been termed as the “pedigree ‘craze’”, this period experienced a growth in the production of

⁸⁵ Doris Goldstein, ‘The Professionalisation of History in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries’, *Storia della storiografia*, 3 (1983), 3-26, p. 21.

⁸⁶ Round, ‘Historical Genealogy’, p. 1.

⁸⁷ John Horace Round, *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1901), pp. ix, xvi.

genealogies overseen and validated by the College of Arms.⁸⁸ The need to have one's status officially and legally recorded through the work of the heralds was exacerbated by the exposure and expansion of the Scottish nobility to the Stuart British court. From 1615, peerages were traded for money and from the beginning of James I's reign people paid to be recommended for a knighthood, making these titles effectively a commodity. Between 1605 and 1609 three hundred and seventy-one knighthoods were 'sold'.⁸⁹ Because of this vast increase in knighthoods, a need for further distinction appeared. In 1611 James established the institution of baronets as rank between that of a knight and a baron, which enabled him to raise funds for the settlement of Ulster.⁹⁰ These developments took place in a social environment where many rising gentry had increased their wealth from lands taken from dissolved religious houses, trade, or from office-holding, and such men as these sought to consolidate their social position.⁹¹ Anyone of free birth and ten pounds a year in land, or three hundred pounds in moveable goods, could be registered with the College of Arms, and between 1560 and 1640 nearly four thousand grants of arms were made.⁹² In this competitive and unstable environment, the older nobility sought to reassure themselves of their innate and ancient gentility, whilst the newly created nobility sought bogus pedigrees in order to "clothe their social nakedness."⁹³ In 1634 Anthony Stafford wrote:

... there is no Country under the Sunne, that hath such an Apochryphall Gentry as the *English*, where the sonnes of Brokers blend with, and outbrave, and precede the most Ancient of it, as if clothes had the guift to ennoble blood.⁹⁴

Genealogy and heraldry was not only fuelled by the need to demonstrate social status, but also by economic insecurities and demographic crises. For many families whose line was dying out, a well-documented pedigree "could amount to a fully comprehensive insurance policy against genetic or pathological misfortune."⁹⁵ Accordingly, not all genealogies could

⁸⁸ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, pp. 105-14.

⁸⁹ Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1965), pp. 77, 104-19.

⁹⁰ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, pp. 107-08.

⁹¹ Adrian Ailes, 'The Development of the Heralds' Visitations in England and Wales 1450-1600', *The Coat of Arms*, 217 (2009), 7-23, p. 15.

⁹² D. M. Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth: England Under the Later Tudors, 1547-1603* (London: Longman, 1983), pp. 69-70.

⁹³ Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641*, p. 23.

⁹⁴ Anthony Stafford, *The Guide of Honour, or the ballance wherein she may weigh her actions* (London: T[homas] C[otes] for S. Cartwright, dwelling at the Bible in Duck-lane, 1634) pp. 59-60, in *Early English Books Online* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:18368:39> [accessed 7 September 2008].

⁹⁵ David Allan, "What's in a Name?": Pedigree and Propaganda in Seventeenth-Century Scotland', in *Scottish History: The Power of the Past*, ed. by Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), pp. 147-67, p. 157.

be trusted especially when they were “usually compiled by interested persons”, whose object was to increase status through the formation of a long pedigree that provided proof of entitlement to arms or to attach “new men to old acres.”⁹⁶

It must be borne in mind that the function of the College of Arms, or Heralds’ Office, was not primarily genealogical. Heraldry had emerged in the twelfth century initially as a method of identification. As heraldic imagery quickly became highly stylized and hereditary it took on an extra social function of signifying noble status. It came to be applied in an increasing variety of contexts, such as during funerals and on items of “plate, jewels, paper, parchment, windows, gravestones and monuments.”⁹⁷ As heraldry developed, unauthorized arms became more widespread and merchants began to place their trademarks on shields in imitation of such imagery.⁹⁸ The College of Arms was incorporated 1484 as an attempt to police the use of heraldry and to keep a record of the nobility and gentry of the shire, which in turn provided the crown with information not only on who owed service by knights fee and who inherited as tenants-in-chief, but also, as the gentry grew as a governing class, who acted, or could potentially act, in central and local government.⁹⁹ The role of the heralds was not only to regulate the proper use of title and coats of arms, but the kings of arms also had the power to grant arms to eminent men. This was done through the practice of visitations, which were introduced in the latter half of the fifteenth century when the two kings of arms – the Clarenceaux and the Norroy – were commissioned to visit gentry in order to register their arms and descents in a permanent and legal form. This task was not primarily genealogical and early rolls of honour contain no lineages. However, knowledge of descent and of the different branches of a family was needed in order to both differentiate coats of arms and identify who had the right to bear them.¹⁰⁰ The beginnings of genealogical-historical method can be seen in a late seventeenth-century document outlining the visitation process, which is attributed to Dugdale. In it he describes how applicants were required to submit a signed pedigree showing “the Christian names of his Ancestors, as far as his own Certain knowledge can reach.”¹⁰¹ In 1568 the Earl Marshall had decreed that the records of the kings of arms’ visitations were to be deposited in the college library. This measure was accompanied by

⁹⁶ William P.W. Phillimore, *The Family Historian: A Short Initial Guide for Writing, Printing and Illustrating the History of a Family* (London: Phillimore, 1905), p. 8.

⁹⁷ Stephen Friar, *Heraldry for the Local Historian and Genealogist* (London: Grange, 1997), p. 9.

⁹⁸ Ailes, 'The Development of the Heralds' Visitations in England and Wales 1450-1600', p. 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Cited by Janet Verasanso, 'The Staffordshire Heraldic Visitations: Their Nature and Function', *Midland History*, XXVI (2001), 128-43, p. 129.

an increasing interest on behalf of some heralds in antiquarian matters, which gave more weight to documentary proof when registering descent and rights to arms. Indeed, Dugdale's instructions set out that if "the person thus entering his descent, can make out his pedigree, by any Aunthentique evidence for more descents than the memory of any man Living can reach: it will be proper to register the same with a Voucher of those Authorities viz^t auntient writings, notes from publique records, Registers of Churches, Monumentall Inscriptions, or what else may be relyed upon, as of Creditt"¹⁰², as well as evidence of arms, "shewed from some auntient Decree, sealed with an Impression of the Armes he pretends to, or some sculpture upon Tombes and Monuments, Armes in Glasse windowes, auntient paynted Tablettts, or some such Aunthenticque Testimoniall as may demonstrate that his lineall auncestors have made use of them above 80 Yeares"¹⁰³.

The system, however, was open to abuse and not all heralds were as interested in recording accurate proof to arms and lineages as Dugdale. It must also be borne in mind that the heralds' visitations were largely based on information voluntarily supplied to them.¹⁰⁴ Prior to the 1560s, visitations were carried out in the homes of the gentry. After 1566, the local gentry were summoned to appear with their accompanying documentation before the visiting herald in the chief town in the hundred. To help with their work, the kings of arms also began to appoint local deputies.¹⁰⁵ Not all heralds and their deputies had exacting standards and not all gentry were compliant. In addition, arms were registered on the payment of fees and some heralds were more interested in making money than providing an accurate and true record.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, not all of the College of Arms' records could be trusted. The mistakes of the heralds were famously repeated in later genealogical publications of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Arthur Collins' *The Peerage of England* (1709) and Burke's *Peerage*, and it was these printed inaccuracies based upon "the unsupported statements of a herald", that Round ruthlessly hunted down, in his own words, "nailing them up one by one, as a gamekeeper nails up his vermin."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² 'viz' is an abbreviated form of the Latin, *videlicet*, which means 'to wit' or 'namely'. 'Auntient' is another spelling of the word 'ancient.'

¹⁰³ Trinity College MS cited by Anthony Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages: An Inquiry into the Growth of the Armorial Function of Heraldry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 3-4. Other sources state that proof of arms must be proven sixty years prior to the claim.

¹⁰⁴ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, pp. 108-10.

¹⁰⁵ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, pp. 372-73.

¹⁰⁶ Ailes, 'The Development of the Herald's Visitations in England and Wales 1450-1600', p. 22; Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641*, pp. 66-68.

¹⁰⁷ Round, *Family Origins and Other Studies*, p. 8.

Round was involved in numerous controversies, including one with the genealogist and Norfolk antiquarian, Walter Rye (1843-1929). In 1914 Rye wrote to Round asking him for help: “I do wish before I die (I am in my 72nd year!) you will be able to identify for me Avelina or Alue de Rye who was widow of Stewart de Rye.”¹⁰⁸ By the 1920s, however, the pair was deeply embroiled in an argument that mainly centred upon the authenticity and reliability of the so-called *Colchester Chronicle*.¹⁰⁹ This is not to say that Round, like many other antiquarians and historians, was not willing to share his research with others. In 1901 Round wrote to Mr Neilson informing him of some charters he had found that referred to an agreement “with a hired champion in 1272.” However, he did not suffer fools gladly and in the same letter he informs his correspondent that he has just published an article in *The Genealogist* which “squashes poor Mr. Stewison, who (as you doubtless saw) rashly executed a war-dance in ‘St. Andrews’.”¹¹⁰ Antiquarians and heralds were not the only ones to experience Round’s disparagement; he also locked horns with the historian Edward Augustus Freeman (1823-92). Freeman had done much to examine the genealogical connections that tied England to Scandinavia and Normandy during the period of the Norman Conquest and, like Round, had spoken out against Burke. Nevertheless, Round vigorously exposed some of Freeman’s mistakes and his criticism of him has since been described as “savage even by the standards of genealogists.”¹¹¹

Despite his attempt to establish genealogical criticism as a branch of history based upon the same rigorous principles, Round’s work was rejected by his peers. In an anonymous review of his book, *The Commune of London, and Other Studies* (1899), the historian, Frederick William Maitland (1850-1906) attacked Round on several grounds. The charge was that Round’s published research was not only too piecemeal but also that it was too preoccupied by detailed examinations of the sources at the expense of larger and broader historical themes. In turn, he was also criticised for his laconic and personal remarks. The work was criticised for giving readers “too much controversy and too little history. Their interest in the twelfth century is always being distracted by the castigation of some unfortunate being who lived in the nineteenth.” While Maitland recognized that Round, “has an unrivalled power of making historical material out of corrected pedigrees”, he was critical of Round’s publication of “short studies of disconnected themes.” He wrote:

¹⁰⁸ Institute of Historical Research, London, Correspondence of J. H. Round, MS 669/2.

¹⁰⁹ IHR, Correspondence of J. H. Round, MS 669/18; John Horace Round, 'The Legend of 'Eudo Dapifer'', *The English Historical Review*, CXLV (1922), 1-34.

¹¹⁰ Glasgow University Library, Correspondence of J.H. Round to Mr Neilson, MS Gen. 1114(m)13.

¹¹¹ Pine, 'Historians Reconsidered XII: J. H. Round', p. 340.

It is not averse to original research, but it wants continuous history. Froude perused vast quantities of manuscript materials, and yet died an admired author and a Regius Professor.¹¹²

Two years later Round published his *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (1901). As if in response to Maitland's charge, the flyleaf included citations from established professional historians of the day – Stubbs, Palgrave and Freeman – all lauding the importance of genealogical study and its significance to the history of the nation at large. Yet Round never published a significant volume of “continuous history” to silence Maitland's and others' criticisms. David Stephenson argues that Round had been planning to publish a major monograph, but disagrees with William Page's view that Round was unable to fully complete his work because of ill-health. Instead, he argues that Round was simply fulfilling his mentor, Stubbs' exhortations to become an expert in a sub-discipline.¹¹³ Nevertheless, perhaps one of the lasting outcomes of this spat between Maitland and Round was that genealogy became divorced both from the nascent historical profession and the antiquarian tradition. The myopic and pedantic figure of the antiquarian preoccupied with his own genealogical axe to grind was hard to shake off.

Antiquarianism

Whilst Round, in attesting to the modernity and newness of his methods, dismissed much of the earlier antiquarian genealogical work as “instances of evidentiary failure, naivety, or outright malice”, he nevertheless drew upon a tradition of diplomatic techniques and an antiquarian dependence upon archival sources that was developed in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹⁴ Diplomatics grew out of a tradition of scholarly rules that had developed from antiquity in order to test the trustworthiness of documents. It was furthered as a discipline in the latter half of the seventeenth century through the publication of Jean Mabillon's *De re diplomatica* (1681). Mabillon (1632-1707) was a French Benedictine monk of the congregation of Saint Maur, who later became an assistant librarian of the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Germain-de-Près, Paris. *De re diplomatica* was dedicated to the influential statesman, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-83), who had employed Mabillon in historical and genealogical researches. During this period in France, many who had bought *seigneuries* were claiming they were of noble status and therefore were exempt

¹¹² Frederick W. Maitland, 'Review of The Commune of London, and Other Studies by J. H. Round, M.A. With a Prefatory Letter by Sir Walter Besant (Constable & Co.)', *The Athenaeum*, (1899), 547-48; John Horace Round, *The Commune of London, and Other Studies* (Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1899).

¹¹³ David Stephenson, 'The Early Career of J.H. Round: The Shaping of a Historian', *Essex Archaeology and History*, 12 (1980), 1-10.

¹¹⁴ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, p. 131.

from taxation. Noble status theoretically rested upon evidence of military service from ancient times.¹¹⁵ As a result, the authentication of pedigrees and other genealogical documents – which in this context were the recorded guarantee of exemption from taxation – demanded a more nuanced grasp of diplomatic skills.¹¹⁶

Unlike Mabillon, the English heralds were not driven by the demands of taxation, so much as by the fees they gained by granting arms. Nevertheless, they are credited with the rise of antiquarianism and with the development of historical method. Some of the founders of the first antiquarian societies were heralds, and were often appointed as keepers of records. One figure was the Windsor Herald and Keeper of Records of the Tower, Augustine Vincent (?1584-1626), who brought his knowledge of records to bear upon the compilation of pedigrees and, along with the Somerset Herald Robert Glover (?1543-1588), promoted the value of record evidence to genealogy.¹¹⁷ Glover included transcripts of old charters in his visitation records and was apparently responsible for introducing a rectilinear tabular form of pedigree that superseded the narrative and *pied de grue*, or ‘crane’s foot’ forms. Both Glover and Vincent added collateral information to the records which was not strictly necessary for the fulfilment of their visitations – a fact that in itself demonstrates a developing historical interest.¹¹⁸ Similarly, the herald, Robert Cooke (d. 1593) included drawings of ecclesiastical monuments.¹¹⁹ Heraldry, antiquarian interests and a respect for archives were often combined. In 1638 Dugdale, the distinguished antiquarian and Keeper of Records of the Tower, was appointed to the College of Arms. Dugdale’s reliance and reference to source material, combined with an ability to skilfully employ evidence to advance an argument, distinguished his work and raised the standard for centuries to follow. The heralds’ work certainly helped others in their antiquarian pursuits. In his preface to *The Description of Leicester Shire: Containing Matters of Antiquitye, Historye, Armorye, and Genealogy* (1622), the county historian, William Burton thanked the, “expert

¹¹⁵ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 85.

¹¹⁶ The quest for the origins of diplomatics is deceptive as the “ensemble of scholarly knowledge and rules applied to the critical examination of written acts, intended to test their authenticity or sincerity” can be found as far back as antiquity. However, Mabillon’s publication perhaps does mark the beginning of diplomatics as a separate scholarly discipline. Diplomats was further developed in the nineteenth century under the influence of philology and the scientific school of historiography, so that by the end of the century it was considered to be an auxiliary branch of historical study. Olivier Guyotjeannin, ‘The Expansion of Diplomats as a Discipline’, *American Archivist*, 59 (1996), 414-21, p. 415; Heather MacNeil, *Trusting Records: Legal, Historical and Diplomatic Perspectives* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000). I am grateful to Laurence Brockliss for this observation (email to Michael Moss 13 February 2008).

¹¹⁷ Anthony Camp, ‘Genealogy: The Construction of Family Histories’, in *Human Pedigree Studies: Proceedings of a Conference Organised by the Galton Institute, London, 1998*, ed. by Robert A. Peel (London: The Galton Institute, 1999), pp. 1-17, p. 3; Wagner, *English Genealogy*, pp. 364-66.

¹¹⁸ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, pp. 371-72.

¹¹⁹ Ailes, ‘The Development of the Herald’s Visitations in England and Wales 1450-1600’, p. 20.

Genealogist, my good friend and kinsman, M. Augustine Vincent, by his place Rouge Croix, Officer at Armes, who very kindly from the Tower hath imparted to me many worthy notes, elsewhere not to be had or found.”¹²⁰

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the College of Arms lessened in importance. It can be argued that this was because more weight was given to other symbols of gentility other than a long pedigree and a coat of arms. Alongside birth, other qualities such as taste, manners and conduct increasingly became the defining features of nobility. This was accompanied by “a substantially greater interest among the literate in the achievements and contributions of specific, named, individual ancestors” and “a much more intimate connection between the familial and the national pasts.”¹²¹ Accordingly, family histories became less about the length of the chain into the past and more about inspiring the reader to emulate their illustrious ancestry. For instance, some family histories, like Gordon of Gordonstoun’s *Genealogical History* that was composed in the 1620s was inspired by the Roman historian, Tacitus, aimed “in some Measure...to raise in them a generous emulation of their illustrious Ancestors.”¹²²

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the concept of gentry-honour was redefined. The specific meanings of various titles created in a chivalric age dwindled with the obligations attached to them, and new meanings of nobility arose. Stress on the virtues of godliness and the Aristotelian notion of public service and leisurely independence came to outweigh lineage as a claim to gentlemanly honour.¹²³ Indeed, “wealth and lineage counted for much in being able to claim gentry status but selection for county office was the true test.”¹²⁴ In turn, while Protestants could become honourable through service to the commonweal, Catholics were often excluded from public office. In some cases genealogical activity can be seen as a reaction to this religious instability. One of Dugdale’s acquaintances was the nobleman and antiquary Sir Thomas Shirley (c.1590-

¹²⁰ William Burton, 'To the Reader', in *The Description of Leicester Shire: Containing Matters of Antiquitye, Historye, Armorye, and Genealogy* (Printed [by William Jaggard] for Iohn White at the holy lambe in litle Brittainne neare vnto Aldersgate Street, 1622), in *Early English Books Online* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_val_fmt=&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:7532> [accessed 26 September 2008].

¹²¹ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, p. 98.

¹²² William Gordon, *The History of the Ancient, Noble, and Illustrious Family of Gordon* (Edinburgh, 1726) cited by Allan, p.162.

¹²³ J. S. Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution: Essays* (London: Longman, 1993), p. 197.

¹²⁴ Edward Higgs, *The Information State in England: The Central Collection of Information on Citizens since 1500* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 34.

1654).¹²⁵ Shirley was one of small group of midland antiquarians who were dedicated to co-operative research and use of archives. He was one the signatories, alongside Dugdale and Sir Christopher Hatton to the agreement for Sir Edward Dering's society, *Antiquitas Rediviva*.¹²⁶ His obsession with tracing his family lineage to Anglo-Saxon times can be interpreted as a reactive stance that provided him with an ancient claim to gentlemanly honour when, as a Catholic, other avenues of promotion were denied to him.¹²⁷

Not surprisingly, the status of the College of Arms was affected by the political instabilities of the period. In 1641 the Court of Chivalry, where false arms were prosecuted, was abolished and the College of Arms never fully recovered its status when the Court was reinstated after the Civil War. During the Restoration the College continued to struggle to place its authority on a statutory basis. This was partly because the impartial genealogical arbitration of the College of Arms was needed less and less. At the same time, the role of central courts in settling property disputes expanded and the introduction and rapid adoption of legal instruments such as strict settlement in the late seventeenth century became more widespread.¹²⁸ As Woolf argues, during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "the conveyancer and the attorney were likely to be of more value than the herald in an age of entails, contingent remainders, and life interests."¹²⁹

Yet the desire for lineage, coats of arms and title did not wane but in a period of social upheaval continued and, for some, became more pertinent. Janet Verasanso in her study of visitations in Staffordshire has discovered that the number of those wishing to be registered increased after the Civil War. Even though later disclaimed by the heralds, men who had distinguished themselves during the Interregnum continued to use their arms, proving that there was still social prestige in doing so.¹³⁰ Despite the abolition of the Court of Chivalry, G. D. Squibb reports that many Parliamentarians were armigerous, and for them, "heraldic chaos can have held no attraction".¹³¹ Instead of waning, genealogical interest became a

¹²⁵ Richard Cust, 'Catholicism, Antiquarianism and Gentry Honour: The Writings of Sir Thomas Shirley', *Midland History*, 23 (1998), 40-70.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43; Joan Evans, *A History of the Society of Antiquaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 21.

¹²⁷ Completed in the 1630s, but never published, Shirley's *Genealogicke history*, traced the achievements of his family from the time of their supposed Anglo-Saxon ancestor, Sewale of Ettington. Cust, 'Catholicism, Antiquarianism and Gentry Honour: The Writings of Sir Thomas Shirley', p. 48.

¹²⁸ H. J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System: English Landownership 1650-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 19.

¹²⁹ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, pp. 111-13.

¹³⁰ Verasanso, 'The Staffordshire Heraldic Visitations: Their Nature and Function', pp. 139-40.

¹³¹ G. D. Squibb, *The High Court of Chivalry: A Study of the Civil Law in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 68.

more widely spread signifier of cultural and social capital. This was partly because the practice of genealogy did not exclude but required the skills of learning, which was seen as a gentlemanly attribute. The writing and compilation of genealogies can be seen as a corollary to the antiquarian growth in literacy and interest in history. Shirley himself described learning as “one of the qualities required of a complete gentleman” that enabled one to enter that “rare knowledge of genealogical science.”¹³² In this way, genealogy came to be a demonstration of leisurely time that underpinned the notions of free action and virtue, and was a scholarly and antiquarian activity that gave gentlemen a “rare knowledge” that was based on reference to restricted archives.¹³³ Genealogical information not only distinguished gentlemen but partly made them, as the research itself bred gentlemanly qualities both by developing the skills of scholarship and by giving them an opportunity to contemplate the virtuous actions of their forebears.

The contemplation of virtue and the question of whether it was inherited through birth, or whether it had to be earned, and how it could be measured and judged was a major preoccupation during this period. The literary scholar, Michael McKeon argues that during the period from 1600 to 1740 there was “a cultural crisis in attitude toward how the external social order [was] related to the internal, moral state of its members.” This can be seen in the preoccupation with the question of who genuinely qualified as a gentleman, and can be summarized by the question: “What kind of social existence or behaviour signifies an individual’s virtue to others?” In turn, this crisis was related to “a major cultural transition in attitudes toward how to tell the truth in narrative”, encapsulated in the query: “What kind of authority or evidence is required of narrative to permit it to signify truth to its readers?”¹³⁴ Drawing upon a dialectical theory of genre, McKeon argues that these two analogous states of instability, termed “questions of truth” and “questions of virtue”, became the “enabling foundation of the novel.”¹³⁵

These tensions over questions of truth and virtue can be seen in the county history, which was one of the main genres of genealogical knowledge. Often the county history aimed at didacticism by encouraging virtuous imitation. The Royalist, Dugdale, in his county history, the *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656), which was published during the Civil War,

¹³² Cited by Cust, 'Catholicism, Antiquarianism and Gentry Honour: The Writings of Sir Thomas Shirley', p. 55.

¹³³ Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹³⁴ Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740*. 15th anniversary edn (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 20.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

informed his readers that his “principall ayme having been, by setting before you the noble and eminent Actions of your worthy Ancestors, to incite the present and future ages to a virtuous imitation of them.”¹³⁶ In this way, the county history was intended to be used as an exemplar of virtuous nobility and stability, thereby fostering narratives that set out the honourable deeds of the county’s ancestry. At the same time, Dugdale’s *Antiquities* and *Baronage of England* are described by Wagner as “contributions of the first importance to genealogical literature”, because the pedigrees within these works are, “the first to exemplify the great principle that for every statement made contemporary record evidence must if possible, be cited.”¹³⁷ Because of this scholarly practice, to some extent the county history also demonstrated a kind of authority which permitted it to signify truth to its readers.

The genealogical element of the county history, however, also exposes a tension between questions of virtue and questions of truth. The veracity of the county history, demonstrated through its use of reference to archival sources, is interpreted as a sign that genealogy “became more generally recognized as an aid to historical writing and antiquarian scholarship rather than as an end in itself.”¹³⁸ Indeed, the few historians that write about the historiography of the county history often celebrate its emergence in the seventeenth century as the birth of local history and the predecessor to the *Victoria County History* series.¹³⁹ Here, two hundred years later, the genealogical element is subsumed under the greater aim of historical description and analysis.

Yet one of the aims of genealogical narratives within county histories and elsewhere was not necessarily to demonstrate the methodology of truth-saying but to encourage virtuous imitation. Significantly, the sense of what and who is noble or virtuous has changed; nowadays, to be an upper-class gentleman is to be superior and exclusive rather than honourable. When county histories are recognised as early contributions to Round’s brand of scientifically-based ‘new genealogy’, they are often dismissed because, by virtue of their genealogical material, they are “tarred with the brush of feudal and dynastic

¹³⁶ William Dugdale, *The antiquities of Warwickshire illustrated from records, leiger-books, manuscripts, charters, evidences, tombes, and armes: beautified with maps, prospects and portraictures* (London: Thomas Warren, 1656) p. 4, in *Early English Books Online* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_val_fmt=&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:58176> [accessed 13 January 2008].

¹³⁷ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 369.

¹³⁸ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, p. 98.

¹³⁹ M. W. Greenslade, 'Introduction: County History', in *English County Histories: A guide*, ed. by C. R. Elrington, C. R. J. Currie, and C. P. Lewis (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994), pp. 9-25.

attitudes.”¹⁴⁰ The historian, Jack Simmons recognises that Dugdale’s *Antiquities* represents a “new stage in the development of the English county history”, nevertheless, he still describes this work, and Robert Thoroton’s *Antiquities of Nottinghamshire* (1677), (which was modelled on Dugdale’s *Antiquities*), as “narrow” precisely because they focussed on the entitlements of the powerful, “the history of the county families, their heraldry and genealogy, their tombs in the churches and the descent of their estates.”¹⁴¹ In other words, Simmons argues that because of their genealogical content, county histories are inevitably elitist and are in this respect distinctly different to the aims and attitudes of twentieth-century local historiography.

In contrast to Simmons and Wagner, Woolf does not read Dugdale’s *Antiquities* as primarily a genealogical work to be either castigated or celebrated, but instead views it as evidence of the development of historical narrative, separate from the strictly genealogical “pseudo-biblical series of ‘begats’”. He writes that the *Antiquities*:

... prints pedigrees of the county’s great families and the book is full of illustrated arms, seals and effigies, but its focus is not strictly heraldic or even genealogical. Episodes in the lives of some famous antecedents are selected for graphic illustration that render their subjects into more than mere links in a chain.¹⁴²

Here, Woolf argues that the work is not “strictly” genealogical because it contains biographical narrative; he therefore considers it to be more historical. What this demonstrates is that when looking at early examples of ‘genealogical’ material, what is considered to be ‘strictly’ genealogical is open to debate. It is hard to split the historical elements from the genealogical. This is because the county history – like most genres – is a hybrid, containing in various differing instances different proportions of visual, narrative, genealogical, heraldic, chorographic and topographical material. As Burton explained to his readers of *The Description of Leicester Shire* in 1622, county histories were designed to cater to differing tastes:

I have of purpose ... used such historicall digressions, as with fitness might upon the precedent Treatise have dependence, like unto those artificiall Cookes

¹⁴⁰ 'Preface', Anthony Wagner, *Pedigree and Progress: Essays in the Genealogical Interpretation of History* (London: Phillimore, 1975).

¹⁴¹ Jack Simmons, *English County Historians* (Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1978), pp. 7, 9.

¹⁴² Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, p. 134.

and Confectionaries, who in setting forth of a feast or banquet, doe sit severall dishes and conceits for severall palates.¹⁴³

In this way, genealogical information can be interpreted not so much a “historically digression” but rather as a significant part of a larger, equally divergent feast set out to interest, teach and entertain.

The content of the county history was clearly shaped by the author’s patrons. One of the principle groups of readers and subscribers to county histories were the families or descendants of the county families and local gentry and yeomanry who featured within them. The first county history to appear was William Lambarde’s *A Perambulation of Kent* in 1576. In the Preface, Thomas Boughton, (former Sheriff of the county), commended the book “to his countrymen, the gentlemen of the county of Kent.”¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Dugdale’s *Antiquities* was written for a specific county-gentry readership, the “Noble Countrymen, as the most proper Persons, to whom it can be presented.”¹⁴⁵ Writers were sensitive to the fact that the family histories of the local gentry featured in the histories of the lands in which they owned and oversaw. Accordingly, aware that in touching matters of genealogical descent and heraldry his work could be controversial, Burton, “forborne to write of the Moderne, onely speaking of the old and ancient, whose families are extinct lest perhaps for not giving to each one.”¹⁴⁶

The genre of the county history demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between topography and genealogy. The interests of land and lineage were closely bound. It was increasingly common during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for wealthy men to invest in land. Yet from a purely financial perspective, land was not always a lucrative prospect, especially during wartime when landowners were heavily taxed and, if they were Royalists, attacked and confiscated. Ownership of land, however, was not merely pursued for financial reasons; there were considerable social and political gains in owning an estate, which centred upon the establishment of a dynasty. Frequently the newly moneyed – which often included a proportion of younger sons of gentry and the extended kin of landed families – bought estates with a view to establishing their own landed family. However,

¹⁴³ 'To the Reader', Burton, 'To the Reader', p. 2, in *Early English Books Online*.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Boughton (1576) cited by Greenslade, 'Introduction: County History', p. 16.

¹⁴⁵ Dugdale, *The antiquities of Warwickshire illustrated from records, leiger-books, manuscripts, charters, evidences, tombes, and armes: beautified with maps, prospects and portraictures* p. 3, in *Early English Books Online*.

¹⁴⁶ 'To the Reader', Burton, 'To the Reader', p. 2, in *Early English Books Online*.

those with particular demographic circumstances such as no immediate male heir, lots of children and younger sons were disinclined to purchase a landed estate.¹⁴⁷

Land ownership and dynastic ambition were intimately intertwined and were enshrined in the practices of inheritance. From the mid-sixteenth century to the latter half of the nineteenth century, (when in 1882 the Settled Land Act granted tenants for life the inalienable power to sell their estates), landed families regularly used the legal arrangement of strict settlement to manage their affairs. Strict settlement enabled landed families to “tie up the succession of a specific landed estate for a generation ahead by ensuring that the apparent owner at any given time was only a tenant for life with very limited powers.”¹⁴⁸ Whether explicitly reinforcing patrilineal principles or not, strict settlement can mainly be seen as a reflection of an ingrained deep desire to keep landed property intact from one generation to the next and was closely connected with the powerful emotions that centred upon the ancestral home and the inherited estate. Primogeniture is hard to sustain since, in a stable population, forty per cent of families will fail to produce a male heir.¹⁴⁹ As such, property and titles inevitably had to descend laterally to other male branches or through marriage. In such circumstances, the recording and tracing of pedigree was an integral and vital pursuit for the gentry class.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, an independent identity established through loyalty and connection to land rather than the monarchy became increasingly important, especially as land ownership brought with it political rights and obligations; by the act of 1711 members were required to own at least £300 per annum in land in order to enter parliament.¹⁵⁰ Within such environment, county histories, with their emphasis on ancient landed property, gentlemanly virtue and aristocratic privilege, were seen as a conservative force that counterbalanced any revolutionary tendencies during the eighteenth century. Writing in 1790, the Somerset antiquary and parson, John Collinson, explained that county history with its combination of charters, local rights, genealogies and privileges “has often proved a considerable barrier against the violence of despotism on the one hand, and the inconsiderate rage of popular fury on the other.”¹⁵¹ The county was the locus of power for

¹⁴⁷ Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System: English Landownership 1650-1950*, pp. 4, 564-72.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.1.

¹⁴⁹ McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740*, p. 132.

¹⁵⁰ Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System: English Landownership 1650-1950*, pp. 564-65; Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 105.

¹⁵¹ John Collinson, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset*, 3 vols. Vol. 1 (London, 1790), p. viii cited by Sweet, p.36.

established landed elite who often served as justices of the peace, sheriffs, or lieutenants, as such, it was not only the level at which social order was administered in absence of a standing army, but also was the level at which existed a sort of patriotism. Sweet writes that

Even at the eighteenth century, when the growth of the London Season, metropolitan culture and a national press had done much to loosen the ties of the gentry to the locality, the county still operated as a powerful ‘imagined community’ amongst the landed elite of England.¹⁵²

Because of genealogy’s co-dependence with questions of inheritance and with the power invested in landed property owned by county families, it has been dismissed as an elitist pursuit. It is to this question of genealogy and class during the Victorian period that we shall now turn.

Genealogy and class distinction

In the main, what has characterized the perception of the ‘old’ genealogy of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is elitism. Timothy and Guelke write that the

... brand of genealogy that emerged in Britain during the Victorian era ... was concerned with reinforcing the pedigrees of the upper class, and demonstrating, however spuriously, that socially insecure middle class Britons willing to pay for their family trees also had aristocratic ancestors in the past ... Genealogy became associated with reifying unequal class relations through the rubrics of noble blood, family seats, and coats-of-arms from medieval times – a heritage most sensible people knew their ancestors never had.¹⁵³

This view is borne out in at least the fiction of the period, particularly in John Galsworthy’s *Forsyte Saga*, which narrates the story of the decline of an English upper middle-class family. In *The Man of Property*, the Forsytes are described as descended from a “farming stock...from Dorsetshire near the beginning of the century.” The only aristocratic trait that their father, a stone mason who made good as a master-builder in London, is described as having was “a habit of drinking Madeira.”¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, one of the elder brothers of the Forsyte family, Swithin, who, “following the impulse which sooner or later urges thereto some member of every great family,” went to the Heralds’ Office and was told there that he was “undoubtedly of the same family as the well-known

¹⁵² Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, p. 42.

¹⁵³ Timothy and Guelke, *Geography and genealogy: locating personal pasts*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁴ John Galsworthy, *The Man of Property, The Forsyte Saga* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1906; repr. 1968), p. 24.

Forsites with an ‘I’, whose arms were ‘three dexter buckles on a sable ground gules.’” Whilst Swithin did not take up the arms (partly because he did not understand what was meant by the heraldic terminology), he “never forgot, however, their having told him that if he paid for them he would be entitled to use them, and it strengthened his conviction he was a gentleman.”¹⁵⁵

In contrast, his brother, old Jolyon, “in whom a desperate honesty welled up at times” would “allude to his ancestors as: ‘Yeomen – I suppose very small beer.’ Yet he would repeat the word ‘yeomen’ as if it afforded him consolation.”¹⁵⁶ For the Swithins of the “socially insecure middle-class”, genealogy provided a sense of aristocratic credence and strengthened their conviction of being gentlemen. Yet for the urban “old Jolyons”, who viewed the family motto and crest as “humbug”, genealogy was not completely ignored but provided a romantic view of a comforting age-old connection to the honest “yeomanry” of the country. The nostalgic affiliations could go both ways; genealogy could be used to look upwards to a higher social status, or downwards to a lower social status. Both, arguably, could be viewed either positively or negatively depending on the perception of one’s current social status.

Like Timothy and Guelke, in 2001 Simon Fowler also dismissed Victorian genealogy on the grounds of its elitism. He based this on a comment made by W. G. Levenson Gower in the preface to a Harleian Society publication who wrote that

... as a genealogical society we are not concerned to find ancestors for families which have risen to the ranks of gentry in recent times: our business is only with the record of those who at the time the entry was made were persons of recognized social position.¹⁵⁷

However, he fails to note the uproar that Gower’s comments made. Describing these comments as “entirely untenable”, Colonel Joseph Lemuel Chester (1821-82) stated that Gower “did not represent the views of the governing body of the Harleian Society.” Decrying Gower’s suggestion that parish registers should not be printed in their entirety, Chester pointed out that the contents of parish registers “are official registers, and almost every individual entry they contain is, or will be sooner or later, of importance or interest to somebody.” He went on to argue that the parish registers of London “abound with entries respecting the younger sons of the gentry of the period, who came up to the city and

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.168-69.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.24-25.

¹⁵⁷ Cited by Simon Fowler, ‘Our Genealogical Forebears’, *History Today*, (2001), 42-43, p. 43.

engaged in trade, and with those concerning other London tradesmen of lower social rank, whose daughters to the gentry, and to no small extent the nobility, were not averse to marry, and who thus became the ancestors of many modern families of distinction.”¹⁵⁸ Another series that the society published were the genealogical manuscripts of Rev. Joseph Hunter (1783-1861), which had been donated to the British Museum upon his death. Himself a son of a cutler, a writer of local and county history of South Yorkshire, and assistant Keeper of Public Records, Hunter’s manuscripts were entitled *Familiae Minororum Gentium* and contained six hundred and fifty pedigrees related to the rising middle classes.

Victorian genealogy can principally be seen as a symptom – if a reactive symptom – of change within the middle and upper classes. The historian, J.H. Plumb argued that “outbreaks of genealogical fever” can be identified during periods when aristocratic identity was in doubt.¹⁵⁹ Controversially, Britain has been described as the “land of fluid class frontiers” and arguably, social mobility, or social insecurity, itself has fed into genealogical interests.¹⁶⁰ There is also a fundamental difficulty in defining what is meant by class. Arguably, the term cannot be applied with any precision before the nineteenth century, when it began more commonly to eclipse other terms as “the principle descriptor of social position.”¹⁶¹ Furthermore, to define class is problematic. One might be raised into a higher economic class and yet remain socially in the class where one started.¹⁶² Despite outward appearances and the perception of continuous incremental growth and stability enshrined in the genealogical metaphor of the rooted tree, identity has never been immutable. Indeed, even trees can wither and die, branches easily break off.

Yet genealogical interests can be linked to social aspiration. Pitt’s enlargement of political peerages in 1784 greatly increased the number admitted to the House of Lords, as men of letters, military men, bankers, lawyers, scientists and industrialists took their seats amongst the landed aristocracy.¹⁶³ There is debate about whether these constituted and represented a change in the aristocracy, as many of these men had already personal and familial

¹⁵⁸ 'Preface', Harleian Society., *The reister booke of Saynte De'nis, Backchurch parishe (City of London) for maryages, christenyges, and buryalles, begynnyng in the yeare of O[u]r Lord God 1538*. ed. by Joseph Lemuel Chester (London: Harleian Society, 1878), pp. v-vii.

¹⁵⁹ J. H. Plumb, *The Death of the Past* (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 31-34.

¹⁶⁰ Anthony Wagner, 'The Land and the Gentry: Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History', *The Times*, Wednesday 1 October 1952, p. 7.

¹⁶¹ Alan J. Kidd and David Nicholls, *The Making of the British Middle Class?* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), p. xvi.

¹⁶² Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 94.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.133.

connections with the nobility.¹⁶⁴ Yet, the Seven Years' War and the Napoleonic Wars stimulated genealogical pursuits in a number of ways. Firstly, it created new naval and military honours, seen in the careers of such men as General Sir Richard Hussey Vivian, who came from a family of lesser gentry and established a shining career in the army during the Napoleonic Wars. He became a Whig MP and was created a Baron in 1841.¹⁶⁵ Secondly, the French wars increased the country's wealth and a meritocracy of administrators appeared. This class needed pedigrees and histories in which to demonstrate their new position and their patriotic and virtuous value as gentlemen of Britain. Thirdly, war abroad focussed the antiquarian's attention on their own country; consequently, the pursuit of heraldry and genealogy became a romantic and patriotic pastime.¹⁶⁶

The peerage is a useful marker of social prestige, and adjustments within it have been used as a sign of wider social change. Towards the end of the Victorian period, even though the majority were well-connected, more people from the commercial, industrial and legal sectors were admitted to the House of Lords. In 1859 Samuel Smiles noted that "plodding industry has far oftener worked its way to the peerage by the honourable pursuit of the legal profession than by any other. No fewer than seventy British peerages, including two dukedoms, have been founded by successful lawyers."¹⁶⁷ Ralph E. Pumphrey states that in the period 1837 to 1851 forty-five per cent of the newly titled came from the ranks of the nobility, compared to ten per cent from other backgrounds. However, in the period from 1897 to 1911 the percentage of those from the ranks of the nobility had fallen to thirteen per cent, while in comparison, those from other backgrounds had risen to twenty-seven per cent.¹⁶⁸ The turning point was the first Salisbury ministry in 1885-1886, when Pumphrey argues that the Reform Act of 1867 began to have an effect.¹⁶⁹ The highest ranks of society were changing, albeit at a fairly slow rate.

¹⁶⁴ John Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 23.

¹⁶⁵ Michael McCahill and Ellis Archer Wasson, 'The New Peerage: Recruitment to the House of Lords, 1704-1847', *The Historical Journal*, 46:1 (2003), 1-38, p. 21; Ralph E. Pumphrey, 'The Introduction of Industrialists into the British Peerage: A Study into the Adaptation of a Social Institution', *The American Historical Review*, LXV:1 (1959), 1-16, p. 15.

¹⁶⁶ Roy Strong, *The Story of Britain: A People's History* (London: Pimlico, 1996), p. 377; Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England: A History of the Office and College of Arms* (London: HMSO, 1967), pp. 493-94; Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 133.

¹⁶⁷ Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1986), p. 144.

¹⁶⁸ Pumphrey, 'The Introduction of Industrialists into the British Peerage: A Study into the Adaptation of a Social Institution', p. 7.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.8,14.

This gradual shift in who was being admitted to the House of Lords is reflected in the changes in the landed classes. During the nineteenth century, the purchase of land by the newly moneyed was commonplace and land was available cheaply. But there was a change in who was buying estates in the period between 1820s and the agricultural depression of 1880s. Some of those who bought landed estates had distinguished themselves in law or the military, such as Wellington, Marlborough, Bridgeman and Coke. For them, the purchase of land was to acquire a symbol of their status and transfer it in a complete form to their descendents. However, there were also those who were not known through the traditional public channels, those who came from obscure origins – tradesmen, brewers, merchants, manufacturers and industrialists – who bought estates “in order to escape and obscure their origins and to acquire a status and an association with a social elite which their wealth and previous career could not confer.”¹⁷⁰ After 1815, there was increasingly more of the latter type, as the level of wealth needed to buy estates shifted its source.

These changes are reflected in the growth and the development of biographical reference works during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The eighteenth century witnessed the publication of lists, which have since become standard works of reference. Simon Sigar, a grandson of Sir William Sigar (d.1633) Garter King of Arms, completed a weighty manuscript collection of peers’ pedigrees, *Baronagium Genealogicum* in 1708, which became the basis of Joseph Edmonson (d.1786)’s publication of the same name of 1764.¹⁷¹ Sigar was closely followed by Arthur Collins (1682-1760), who published *The peerage of England* in 1709. In 1769, John Almon, a bookseller and stationer, published and edited *The New Peerage*, which was taken over by the eponymous John Debrett in 1790 who published *The Correct Peerage of England, Scotland and Ireland* in 1802.¹⁷² In 1789, the Norroy King of Arms, Edmund Lodge published *The Peerage of Ireland: or A Genealogical History of the Present Nobility of that Kingdom*. This was followed in the early nineteenth century by the Innes sisters’ series of *Sam’s Annual Peerage of the British Empire* which was later published under Lodge’s name as *The Peerage of the British Empire* (1832).

Perhaps the most famous peerage listings, however, were those first founded by the publication of John Burke’s (1786-1848) *A General and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the United Kingdom* in 1826. Seeking to become the authority

¹⁷⁰ Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System: English Landownership 1650-1950*, pp. 572-73.

¹⁷¹ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 378.

¹⁷² Debrett’s, *History*, (2007) <<http://www.debretts.co.uk/about.php?category=1>> [accessed 23 November 2007].

on matters of title, it had two stated objectives: “perspicuity of arrangement” and “accuracy of detail.”¹⁷³ This was achieved by listing pedigrees alphabetically, and – so Burke claimed – by gathering information from circular letters sent to peers and baronets themselves free of charge. This was followed by *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, Enjoying Territorial Possessions or High Official Rank* in 1833, which broke new ground by recording information which previously had only been recorded in county histories and in heraldic visitations; namely, the pedigrees of people qualified “by landed property to become county members of parliament, but undistinguished by an hereditary title of honour.”¹⁷⁴ In 1848 Sir John Bernard Burke (1814-1892) took over from his father as editor-in-chief. In 1853 he was made Ulster King of Arms and was knighted a year later.

Burke’s publications were immensely popular, partly because they presented information in convenient form and in a succinct narrative style. Such entries, which either appealed to the romantic imagination, or read as a roll call of honour and patriotic service, can be seen in such snippets as the entry for Sir David Home “of Wedderburne, who fell at Flodden-field in 1513, had issue seven sons, well known in the border song, as ‘the Seven Spears of Wedderburne,’” or, in the entry for the Countess of Dysart:

John, a captain in the royal navy killed, in the twenty-fifth year of his age at New York, in a duel, by Lord Muncastor ... he left an only son, Lionel-Robert, who entered the first regiment of the footguards, and was killed, in his nineteenth year, by the bursting of a shell, before Valenciennes. William, an officer in the royal navy, lost ... in the ‘Repulse’ frigate, in a hurricane.¹⁷⁵

The compilation and publication of such reference works has perhaps contributed to genealogy’s poor reputation. As mentioned, they have been interpreted as a sign that genealogy was divergent and separate from other historical and antiquarian pursuits.¹⁷⁶ The publication of lists – in which narrative and references to source material are kept to a minimum to meet the exigencies of the publisher – have, no doubt, contributed to genealogy’s status as shallow. In turn, as argued above, Round’s severe critique of Burke has added to genealogy’s negative reputation.

¹⁷³ ‘Preface’, John Burke, *A General and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire*. 4th edn (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1832).

¹⁷⁴ The edition of 1846-49 was entitled *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry*. Advertisement, ‘Commoners of Great Britain’, *ibid*.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.419,622.

¹⁷⁶ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, pp. 120, 37.

However, not all peerage works have such a tarnished reputation. George Edward Cokayne (1825-1911)'s eight volumes of *The Complete Peerage*, begun in 1887 and completed in 1898, combined details of peerages created in all of the British Isles from 1066 onwards and only included information of the title holders and their direct descendants, leaving out cadets and collaterals. Whilst a few mistakes were carried over into the *Peerage*, principally because Cokayne was not a medievalist, the enlarged second volumes of the work published between 1900 and 1906 and edited by Cokayne's nephew, Vicary Gibbs (1853-1932), H. A. Doubleday and others, came to be relied upon as valuable and canonical historical reference work. Indeed, Round contributed on medieval matters to these volumes, as did George Wentworth Watson. In 1954, Pine described the latest edition of *The Complete Peerage*, edited by Geoffrey Hnllan White, as evidence of the lasting influence of the new critical school of genealogy heralded by Round, making it a work that "graced any field of historical study."¹⁷⁷

Whilst *The Complete Peerage* can be seen as an exception, works such as Burke's *Peerages*, perhaps need to be reappraised within their wider social and historical context. Similar to the county history, the recording and publishing of genealogical information in reference works bolstered and even created social capital. Like Jane Austen's Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch-hall, Somersetshire, who was a man that "for his own amusement, never took up any book but the Baronetage; there he found occupation for an idle hour, and consolation in a distressed one", it can be argued that genealogical reference works were largely written for the upper classes, whether newly established or ancient, and supported their collective memory and hegemony.¹⁷⁸ Certainly, Burke's *Peerages* and *Landed Gentry* "allowed the British-property owning class to be the best referenced in the world."¹⁷⁹ Because of this nexus of power, therefore, the editing and inclusion of persons was a highly controversial undertaking – especially in a society undergoing significant economic and social change. This tension can be seen in numerous criticisms of Burke's peerages and other works of that kind. In 1870, "N" wrote to *Notes and Queries*:

¹⁷⁷ Pine, 'Historians Reconsidered XII: J. H. Round', p. 339; Wagner, *English Genealogy*, pp. 386-87; G. S. Woods, 'Cokayne, George Edward (1825-1911)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32483>> [accessed 8 May 2009].

¹⁷⁸ Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1818), ch. 1, cited in 'Austen, Jane', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford University Press, 2004), in *Oxford Reference Online* <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t115.e163>> [accessed 9 January 2008].

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Woodcock, 'Burke, Sir (John) Bernard (1814-1892)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4022>> [accessed 30 January 2008].

I was looking over a recently published manual [...] and in a brief account of two individuals who have obtained honours—and, I will say, well-merited ones too—I find that both are sons of *esquires*. I mention no names or localities but I can state *from my own knowledge* that one of the above *esquires* was the humble keeper of an old clothes shop, and the other was a farm labourer in an agricultural county. It is highly creditable that their sons should be what they have become by indefatigable and honest industry, but why should a chronicler manufacture *esquires*?¹⁸⁰

Yet it was not only the aristocratic and the landowning classes who were becoming well-referenced. Biographical listings were increasingly concerned with the rising professions – the “Clergymen, Barristers at Law, Officers in the Navy and Army, who are all Gentlemen by profession.”¹⁸¹ From the Civil War onwards, naval and military record-keeping had developed as part of the process of the professionalization of the military and the establishment of a standing army. Some of this information became public, such as the publication of the *Army List* in 1754.¹⁸² Other non-state-funded lists appeared. Following the Reform Act, *Staunton’s Parliamentary Key* (1833) gave the names and addresses of peers, members of parliament, county sheriffs and government ministers. In 1849 the publishers A & C Black produced the first edition of *Who’s Who*. The publisher John Crockford (?1823-1865), the son of a Somerset schoolmaster, published the first edition of his *Crockford’s Clerical Directory* in 1858. In the 1880s the genealogist, Joseph Foster (1844-1905) compiled the albums, *Alumni Oxonienses* (1887), and lists of *Members of Parliament, Scotland, 1357–1882* (1882).¹⁸³ Stone argued that the growth of such listings was not only driven by the “Protestant Ethic”, local and institutional pride, and the expansion of the middle-classes, but also “from that inexhaustible passion for genealogy and ancestor hunting which has gripped large sections of the English upper classes since the sixteenth century.”¹⁸⁴ Indeed, the impulse behind such works can be principally seen as “the desire of emerging professional groups to establish a pedigree for themselves.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ N, 'False Genealogies', *Notes and Queries*, 17 December 1870, p. 525.

¹⁸¹ 'Table of Precedency', Edmund Lodge, *The Peerage of the British Empire, as at present existing, arranged and printed from the personal communications of the nobility* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1832), p. xiv.

¹⁸² Higgs, *The Information State in England: The Central Collection of Information on Citizens since 1500*, pp. 50, 53.

¹⁸³ The former of these was based on the American antiquarian, Joseph Lemuel Chester’s extensive research into the Oxford matriculation records. Cecil R. Humphery-Smith, 'Foster, Joseph (1844-1905)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33217>> [accessed 3 December 2007].

¹⁸⁴ Lawrence Stone, 'Prosopography', *Daedalus*, 100:1 (1971), 46-79, p. 49.

¹⁸⁵ Keith Thomas, *Changing Conceptions of National Biography: The Oxford DNB in Historical Perspective: The Leslie Stephen Special Lecture 2004* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 3.

To some extent genealogy can be dismissed as the idle and vain occupation of the upper classes, nevertheless, what can not be ignored is its narrative potential for the rags to riches story and its role in 'manufacturing esquires'. The "highly creditable" self-potential epitomized by "indefatigable and honest industry" was celebrated in the bestseller of the day: Smiles' *Self-Help* (1859).¹⁸⁶ In a chapter entitled, "Industry and the Peerage", Smiles declared to his readers that "No class is ever long stationary." Making reference to Burke's *Vicissitudes of Families*, Smiles provided examples for the "comparatively modern" nature of the peerage that had "recruited to so large an extent from the ranks of honourable industry."¹⁸⁷ Reminding his readers that "the modern dukes of Northumberland find their head, not in the Percys, but in Hugh Smithson, a respectable London apothecary" he cites several "striking examples of energy of character" whose "story of their lives is worthy of preservation."¹⁸⁸ His examples include the jurist Lord St. Leonards, who was the son of a hairdresser, and William Petty the "son of clothier in humble circumstances" who went on to found the house of Landsdowne, his son becoming Baron Shelburne.¹⁸⁹

The main criticism of Burke did not so much hinge on the fact that it reified unequal class distinctions, but that it was untrustworthy source of information and was historically inaccurate. Even worse, it pandered to vain desires and encouraged others to follow suit. The concern over the authenticity of pedigrees was not only one of placing a limit on the social and cultural capital of the *nouveaux riches*, but it was also a plea for the sake of historical accuracy. An anonymous Irishman's comments regarding Burke's pedigree of the Fitz Gerald of Castle Ishin, Co. Cork is typically critical. He writes:

... the absurdly incorrect pedigree in Burke ought not to stand in print. I shall be extremely obliged if any of the accurate genealogists who read 'N. & Q.' would kindly help to clear up this puzzle, which has points of interest for the historian as well as the genealogist.¹⁹⁰

Extracts such as these from *Notes and Queries*, read like postings to a kind of *Wikipedia* in print, in which an antiquarian community are working to expose and correct errors.¹⁹¹ This

¹⁸⁶ N, 'False Genealogies', p. 525.

¹⁸⁷ Smiles, *Self-Help*, p. 139.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.139-40.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, pp.141,44.

¹⁹⁰ Hibernicus, 'Incorrect Compilers of Genealogies', *Notes and Queries* 19 September 1874, p. 232.

¹⁹¹ This debate over the trustworthiness of print, reader-expectation in relation to different printed genres, and the public responsibilities of authors and editors, almost prefigures the current debate over the trustworthiness of the Internet and online information sources, such as *Wikipedia*. <<http://www.wikipedia.org/>>. Such a comparison would be a fruitful exercise, but as such is beyond the scope of this thesis.

criticism appears to be centred upon the trustworthiness of the printed text and there is a concern that readers – significantly, an increasingly new literate class of readers – will be hoodwinked in their belief that all that is printed is truth.

Part of the criticism also came from the nascent historical profession and hinged upon the distinctions between fact and fiction. Burke's listings were not only famously criticized from 1893 onwards by the renowned genealogist-historian, Round, they were also severely criticised by Freeman, historian of the Norman Conquest.¹⁹² Stating that Burke "shows a very imperfect notion of the duties of authorship or editorship", Freeman described Burke's peerages as "monstrous fictions", pointing out that readers, "especially readers of books of this class, need to be told in very plain words that the stories are false."¹⁹³ In particular, he criticized Burke for his acceptance of genealogies that went back to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, an age "specially open above all others to the inroads of genealogical falsehood" and drew upon a comparison of the Leighton pedigree with the *Domesday Book* to prove that some of the ancestors were fabrications and that the life dates and biography of Richard of Leighton were also made up.¹⁹⁴ However, unlike Round, Freeman did not dismiss all earlier genealogical knowledge, rather he described past genealogical knowledge as a "*mythopoeic* process", a "matter of honest superstition" where the "legend of the family is something like the legend of the saint. It was either true or ought to have been true."¹⁹⁵ While Freeman could forgive the sixteenth and seventeenth-century heralds for this kind of hagiography, he thought it highly irresponsible for Burke to continue in this vein; the nineteenth-century historian's duty was to clearly separate the true from the false and to make these distinctions clear to a gullible and vulnerable class of readership.

Burke's genealogical reference works should also be considered within the wider legal and political context. The number of peerage cases proliferated throughout the nineteenth century. The peerage case of Marmion in 1814 sought to establish the right of title on grounds of tenure only, as in France. This led to the appointment of a committee by the House of Lords to report on the nature of the dignity of a peer of a realm. Between 1819 and 1825 six committee reports were published, all of which were antagonistic to any

¹⁹² Camp, 'Genealogy: The Construction of Family Histories', p. 5; Edward A. Freeman, 'Pedigrees and Pedigree-Makers', *The Contemporary Review* (1877), 11-41, p. 13; Round, *Family Origins and Other Studies*, p. 8; Anthony Wagner, *English Genealogy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 341.

¹⁹³ Freeman, 'Pedigrees and Pedigree-Makers', pp. 12-13.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.15.

claims to peerage by tenure and which favoured right to title through inheritance.¹⁹⁶ This interest increased the demand for evidence which in turn created legal experts in genealogy. In turn, the doctrine of abeyance applicable to ancient baronies created by writ of summons tempted many who had the wealth to pursue old titles, particularly in the period from 1830 to 1850. Indeed, this has been described as “halcyon times for the Peerage lawyers.” Cokayne wrote that:

... supporters of the Whig Government (Lord Melbourne’s) who, under other ministers, might have entered the Peerage from below, had now good reason to expect to be placed *over* the heads of almost the entire Baronage ... provided only that the Peerage lawyer could prove that there was in them ... *some small fraction* of co-representation of some *one* of the *prodigious number* of early Baronies, which (according to modern interpretation) were created *in fee* by the numerous writs of summons issued by the Plantagenet Kings.¹⁹⁷

Although a Tory rather than a Whig, one example of this rise to peerage was Hans Francis Hastings, who succeeded as the twelfth earl of Huntingdon after a period of thirty years abeyance. He was assisted for free by his friend, the Irish lawyer, Henry Nugent Bell who had to prove “the extinction of twelve ancestors, whose male descendants, consisting of sixty-nine persons, it was necessary to prove the absolute removal of, in order to make way for his Lordship’s succession.”¹⁹⁸ In 1820 Bell published a detailed narrative of the research process involved.¹⁹⁹ In a similar vein, an early nineteenth-century user guide written for this market is *Origines Genealogicae; or The Sources Whence English Genealogies May Be Traced* (1828). It was written by an eminent peerage lawyer, Stacey Grimaldi (1790–1863), who was involved in several famous record trials and peerage cases, and was published expressly “for the assistance of claimants to hereditary titles, honours or estates.” Two hundred and fifty copies, each including proofs of “genealogical utility,” were initially printed and sixty subscribers were listed, including the poet laureate, Robert Southey.²⁰⁰ In 1844 John Hubback published *A Treatise on the Evidence of Succession to Real and Personal Property and Peerages*.²⁰¹ All these publications

¹⁹⁶ W. A. Lindsay, ‘Peerage Cases’, *The Ancestor*, 1 (1902), 112–18, pp. 113, 15–16; Wagner, *English Genealogy*, pp. 385–86.

¹⁹⁷ George E. Cokayne cited by Wagner, *Heralds of England: A History of the Office and College of Arms*, p. 496.

¹⁹⁸ Henry Nugent Bell, *The Huntingdon Peerage* (London: Printed for Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1820), p. 370.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Stacey Grimaldi, *Origines Genealogicae; or The Sources Whence English Genealogies may be Traced from the Conquest to the Present Time* (London: Longmans, Rees, Orme, Brown, & Green, 1828).

²⁰¹ John Hubback, *A Treatise on the Evidence of Succession to Real and Personal Property and Peerages* (London, Philadelphia: T. & J. W. Johnson, 1844), p. 476.

described the research process in detail and promoted the use of different archives for genealogical purposes, and because they were all written by lawyers they all were written on the basis of providing admissible evidence.

Throughout the nineteenth century, there emerged a school of Scottish genealogical criticism. Again, this was partly fuelled by peerage claims and was exacerbated by the “jarring nature” of peerage law since the Act of Union.²⁰² It must be borne in mind that the Scottish heraldic system has its own history, traditions and legal status which is separate to England. The Court of the Lord Lyon was established in the fourteenth century to oversee Scottish heraldry and in 1592 the Scottish Parliament gave the Lord Lyon the right to prosecute anyone who used unauthorized arms. After the Act of Union, Scottish peers could only sit in the upper House if they were elected as one of the sixteen representative peers. As the Scottish gentry generally became wealthier and more powerful during the late eighteenth century, they sought equal access to the political benefits of the British peerage. In 1782 the Hamilton decision of 1711 was reversed, thereby allowing Scottish peers with British titles to enter the House of Lords, whereas previously they had been barred. Traditionally, the election of Scottish representative peers had been heavily influenced by government, but in the elections of 1790, in which the Prince of Wales voted as Duke of Rothesay, six representative peers entered the House as supporters of the Whig party. This was followed by more Scottish claims to British peerages.²⁰³ The position of the Scottish peerage continued to be a bone of contention into the nineteenth century when in 1869 complaints were made in *The Times* about the “unfairly inferior position of the Scottish Peerage” and were repeated in the publication of *The Register, and Magazine of Biography* (1869).²⁰⁴ Such developments highlighted the inconsistencies between Scottish and English peerage law and were accompanied by a keen interest in genealogy.

An important figure for Scottish genealogy was John Riddell (1785–1862), a Scottish lawyer and a genealogist. In 1816 he worked on the case of the philosopher Sir William Stirling Hamilton’s claim for his baronetcy and was also successful in claiming the earldom of Crawford for the Lindsay family. Riddell wrote a number of peerage and genealogical works, the most significant being an *Inquiry into the Law and Practice in*

²⁰² John Riddell, *Inquiry into the Law and Practice in Scottish Peerages before and after the Union* (Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, 1842), p. vii.

²⁰³ Michael McCahill, 'The Scottish peerage and the House of Lords in the late eighteenth century', *Scottish Historical Review*, 51:2 (1972), 172-96.

²⁰⁴ *The Register and Magazine of Biography: A Record of Births, Marriages, Deaths and Other Genealogical and Personal Occurrences*. Vol. 2 (London: Nichols and Sons, 1869), p. 13; H, 'The Scottish Peerage', *The Times*, 27 April 1869, p. 12.

Scottish Peerages before and after the Union (1842).²⁰⁵ Well-known for his knowledge of private archives, Riddell was praised for his “absolute reverence for fact and truth” and was seen as heading a new and critical school of genealogy that was specifically Scottish. For Riddell, ‘true’ genealogy was a stern discipline in which there was no place for imagination or fable:

True Genealogy is an austere, stern potentate, governing by unswerving rigid laws founded on truth only, knowing that thereby she can alone act with dignity and advantage; and not a reckless, loose nymph or Bacchante, who in her frolics gives vent to every flattering tale and fable, to cajole and unduly elevate the credulous for her own profit and the amazement of others, to sallies of fancy and imagination.²⁰⁶

In Riddell’s obituary, Lord Lindsey, the famous bibliophile, wrote that:

The new and critical spirit thus awakened in Scotland has expressed itself in that noble company of historical Antiquaries and Genealogists, at once most erudite and acute, who have sprung up during the present century – the Maidments, Robertsons, Stuarts, Sinclairs, Laings, Turnbells, Inneses ... to whom we are indebted for such constant accession to our historical and genealogical knowledge in the present day. And of this company, Mr Riddell stood forth in his time as the elder brother and chief.²⁰⁷

The English bias was not only noted in the interpretation of peerage law, but also in Burke’s publications. The *Popular Genealogists or the Art of Pedigree-Making* (1865), which was written by the Lord Lyon, George Burnett (1822-1890), and published anonymously, severely criticized Burke:

The immense majority of the pedigrees in the *Landed Gentry*, including more especially the Scottish pedigrees, cannot, I fear, be characterized as otherwise than utterly worthless. The errors of the *Peerage* are as nothing to the fables which we encounter everywhere. Families of notoriously obscure origin have their veins filled with the blood of generations of royal personages of the ancient and mythical world.²⁰⁸

Perhaps in reaction to the influence of the romantic historical movement epitomised by the novels of Scott, Burnett describes how Scotland, “once notorious for looseness and credulity in matters of pedigree” was taking a “prominent part” in a “genealogical revival”

²⁰⁵ Lionel Alexander Ritchie, 'Riddell, John (1785-1862)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23612>> [accessed 14 November 2007].

²⁰⁶ John Riddell cited by Joseph Foster, *Collectanea Genealogica* (London: [s.n.], 1881), p. 145.

²⁰⁷ Lord Lindsey, 'Obituary (John Riddell)', *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 15 February 1862, pp. 2-3.

²⁰⁸ George Burnett, *Popular Genealogists: or, The art of pedigree-making* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1865), pp. 20-21.

that had sprung up in order to reject “all that is not borne out by authentic evidence.”²⁰⁹ This interest in the nature of the Scottish peerage was continued into the early twentieth century by the librarian of the Baillie’s Institution, Glasgow, James Richard Anderson (1878-1938), who proposed the compilation of a “Scotch Knights.” Between 1902 and 1909 Anderson corresponded with Cokayne, providing him with information on Scottish Baronets and carrying out genealogical research for him, including notes gleaned from Glasgow’s burial registers. The Scottish baronetage had been created in 1625 by James I in order to provide funds for the colonization of Nova Scotia, and was replaced with the baronetage of Great Britain in 1707 and the baronetage of the United Kingdom in 1801.²¹⁰ Whether Anderson’s information found its way into Cokayne’s *Complete Baronetage* (1900-1906) or not, Cokayne thanks him for his help, commenting that “these Scotch Gentlemen [Baronets] are terrible fellows to deal with.”²¹¹

No doubt others were interested and corresponded about genealogical matters; however, perhaps the key figure in this nineteenth-century “genealogical revival” was the eminent archivist and lawyer, Sir William Fraser (1816-1898). Fraser gained a reputation as an expert diplomatist and was called upon to verify historical documents. He also worked as Keeper of Charters at the Scottish Record Office and for the newly formed Historical Manuscripts Commission (discussed in Chapter Two). In addition he wrote over fifty volumes of genealogical histories on over twenty leading aristocratic and landed Scottish families, who paid handsomely for these publications to be printed privately. The writing of these lavish books brought him congratulations and patronage from the gentry. On 1 June 1896 Fraser was praised in an anonymous article in the *Dundee Advertiser*:

... there is no living writer who has done so much to put flight the vain imaginings of pseudo-historical writers as Sir William Fraser has done. Family historians, following his example, no longer find their materials in the absurdly romantic traditions of a locality. They search for solid facts amongst the documents in charter-rooms and private repositories [...] Now we are beginning to learn that the antiquary or historian who exposes a hoary falsehood or clears away a foul slander is an estimable person, whose services to the commonwealth are incalculable.²¹²

The anonymous writer’s attack against the “vain imaginings” of “pseudo-historicism”, again chimes with the new German type of archival scholarship practiced by Stubbs and

²⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

²¹⁰ Friar, *Heraldry for the Local Historian and Genealogist*, p. 26.

²¹¹ GUL, Correspondence from G. E. Cokayne to J. R. Anderson, MS Gen. 511 (15).

²¹² ‘Sir William Fraser, K.C.B.’, *Dundee Advertiser*, 1 June 1896, p. 2; Gordon Donaldson, *Sir William Fraser: The Man and His Work* (Edinburgh: Edina Press, 1985), pp. 64-65.

Round. Notably, family historians, rather than historians, would seek objective truth and base their work upon documentary evidence deposited *within* the archive rather than *outside* in the “absurdly romantic traditions of a locality.” This latter phrase, the “absurdly romantic traditions of a locality”, takes on an extra resonance in the context of the Scottish Romantic movement and Scotland’s developing status as a tourist destination in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²¹³

Scotland’s romantic status was enshrined within the immensely popular historical novels of Scott and he himself was engaged with antiquarian matters. He knew well the Deputy Registrar of Scotland, Thomas Thompson, and Riddell, who had spoken against Sir Henry Steuart in the ‘Salt-Foot controversy’.²¹⁴ The tension surrounding the ‘pseudo-historicism’, inherent to the questions concerning truth and trustworthiness of narrative and the development of genealogical knowledge, can be seen in Scott’s *The Antiquary* (1816). Preoccupied with ‘questions of virtue’, the novel includes several aristocratic characters, the fortunes of whom principally drive the plot of the novel. The question of who is entitled to be a true aristocrat is investigated through the drama of meritocratic action and inherited title which is laced with the threat of illegitimacy. The baronet, Sir Arthur Wardour is a Stuart supporter. He nearly loses his family seat through debts and his title is rumoured to have been gained illegitimately. Mr Lovel has risen in rank through the meritocracy of the army, yet at the end of the novel he is revealed to be of true, legitimate aristocratic stock, that is, as the son of the Earl Grenville. In turn, the Catholic aristocratic family of Grenville faces annihilation through death and the threat of incest and illegitimate procreation.

Whilst this novel can primarily be seen as an example of the “vain imaginings” of a pseudo-historical writer, it also serves as an early nineteenth-century example of different kinds of genealogical research.²¹⁵ Jonathan Oldbuck is proudly descended from a family of German typographers including, Wolfbrand Oldenbuck, and Aldobrand Oldenbuck, a

²¹³ David McCrone and others, *Scotland - the Brand: The Making of Scottish Heritage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

²¹⁴ The controversy had arisen over a part of the *The Memorie, or Memoirs of the Somervilles* edited by Scott, which had mentioned the Stewarts as a family who had never sat above the salt foot when dining with Somerville of Carunetham. A debate ensued concerning the genealogy and social standing of the Stewart family, the letters of which were printed in *Blackwood’s Magazine* and later were published by Riddell. Walter Scott, *The letters of Sir Walter Scott*. ed. by Herbert John Clifford Grierson. Centenary edn. Vol. VII (London: Constable, 1933), p. 126; Walter Scott, *The letters of Sir Walter Scott*. ed. by Herbert John Clifford Grierson. Centenary edn. Vol. IV (London: Constable, 1933), p. 488; John Riddell, *The Salt-foot controversy, as it appeared in Blackwood’s Magazine; to which is added a reply to the article published in no. XVIII. of that work; with other extracts, and an appendix, containing some remarks on the present state of the Lyon Office* ([Edinburgh], 1818).

²¹⁵ Donaldson, *Sir William Fraser: The Man and His Work*, pp. 61-65.

Protestant who was expelled for printing the Augsburg Confession. Like Scott himself, Oldbuck employs a learned antiquarian memory based on textual verification. In contrast to Oldbuck, stands Edie Ochiltree, a noble “free” commoner and an honest travelling beggar who spurns property and who knows everyone in the region. A romanticized figure, he represents a different kind of genealogical memory based on folklore and is described as “the oracle of the district through which he travels – their genealogist, their newsman, their master of the revels, their doctor at a pinch, or their divine –”.²¹⁶ *The Antiquary* shows the breadth of engagement in the genealogical past, and the variety of classes or types of people who are interested in genealogical matters, whether a matter of local oral community information, individual scholarly antiquarian interest, a matter of immediate social and financial gain or of hereditary pride and identity. What they collectively indicate is that it is not simply the case that the ‘old’ genealogy was solely motivated by aristocratic pride, neither were genealogical interests confined to compiling pedigrees and adopting coats of arms. The ‘old’ genealogy was motivated by several impulses including local interest, a simple desire for stories, romantic nostalgia and national identity. It also included the employment of different kinds of historical sources and methods, from the interpretation of local oral testimony, to inherited objects, to written documentary proof.

Scott’s narratives not only influenced other aspiring fictional writers, but also genealogists and peerage lawyers. Bell’s lively description of his research into the Huntingdon peerage was printed four years after *The Antiquary* and borders on the narrative style of the novel, as he admits:

I hope for indulgence if, relaxing somewhat of professional and historical solemnity, I occasionally venture to mingle a lighter tone of sentiment, and a spice of the gaiety inspired by the fortunate result, with transactions, that, indeed, appear better adapted to make part of a novel, (into which form, by the way, I may hereafter be induced to expand the whole story,)²¹⁷

Bell’s peerage story was repeated by Sir John Bernard Burke (1814-1892).²¹⁸ Even though the Burke family’s genealogical reference works were bestsellers, he still sought to capitalize on the market for historical romance. In 1849 he published two volumes of *Anecdotes of the Aristocracy, and Episodes in Ancestral Story*, which was followed by *Family Romance; or, Episodes in the Domestic Annals of the Aristocracy* in 1854. Intending to “please alike the historic and general reader”, he sought to prove that the

²¹⁶ Walter Scott, *The Antiquary, Everyman's library* (London: Dent, 1907), p. 334.

²¹⁷ Bell, p.220

²¹⁸ 'Earldom of Huntingdon', John Bernard Burke, *Anecdotes of the Aristocracy, and Episodes in Ancestral Story*. 2 vols. Vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1849), pp. 236-54.

“poetry of the brain can rival in interest the pages of British family history”, by providing short interesting narratives from family histories of the aristocracy, the “heroes of marvelous transactions”, which in turn had “been the sources of those beautiful streams of fiction which glitter with the genius of Scott and Bulwer.”²¹⁹ Whilst he did so, however, Burke also stressed that “however strange and startling” the stories were invariably, “not of fable but of truth.”²²⁰

The appeal of genealogical narrative, based upon questions of inheritance and mistaken identity, is attested to by the frequency with which they can be found throughout literature. Here, however, in *The Antiquary* (1816) and *The Huntingdon Peerage* (1820), we have the development of the genealogical quest narrative, a research narrative about seeking and finding out about someone’s ancestry, which shows use of archives and expresses a general desire for biography or life-story. This genealogical quest, the dramatisation of genealogy as self-discovery, was highly popular and had huge commercial appeal and can not only be seen in these nineteenth-century works, but also – as will be demonstrated in Chapter Three – in Alex Haley’s *Roots* and in television programmes such as, *Who Do You Think You Are?*. In all of these works, the claims of historical accuracy exist in tension with biographical narrative and the desire for story. It can be argued that from at least the late nineteenth century onwards and increasingly throughout the twentieth century, there has been a greater interest in and emphasis upon genealogical narrative and memoir, which has perhaps exacerbated such tensions. It is to an outline of generic developments associated with the twentieth century that we shall now turn.

Family history and the second ‘new genealogy’

The term, ‘family history’ became associated with a new type of genealogical practice from the 1960s onwards and was closely allied to developments in social and local history. This practice was not merely concerned with the compilation of pedigrees and with proving status, but was willing to research the social and cultural background of ancestors – no matter how lowly or shameful.²²¹ This took place within the context of history’s fragmentation into specialist sub-disciplines. Very often built on the trope of revisionism, these sub-disciplines sought to redeem the neglected and were associated with individual

²¹⁹ Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer Lytton, first Baron Lytton (1803–1873), was a prolific author.

²²⁰ Burke, *Anecdotes of the Aristocracy, and Episodes in Ancestral Story*, pp. v-vii.

²²¹ Ronald D. Lambert, 'Sounding the Depths of the Convict-Descendant Pool', *The Mail*, 101 (2001), 21-24; Ronald D. Lambert, 'Reclaiming the ancestral past: narrative, rhetoric and the 'convict stain'', *Journal of Sociology*, 38:2 (2002), 111-27.

rights and identity politics. Unlike Round's 'new genealogy', 'family history' was for the most part seen as a grassroots interest, a kind of amateur history with an extra-curricula status that grew outside the academy. In 1981 Stan Newens wrote that "family history has become the major factor stimulating the study of the past outside educational institutions and the ranks of professional historians."²²² When adopting family history, great pains were made to distinguish it from genealogy by dusting off its elitism and snobbishness and its association with eugenics. Family history was celebrated as a newly distinct and democratic subject. Indeed, the American historian Samuel Hays, like Round before him, termed it the "new genealogy."²²³ However, in contrast to Round's "scientific genealogy", 'family history' became the epitome of 'history from below' and, if its status as such was in doubt, the popularity of Alex Haley's *Roots* (1976), the consequent increase in visitors to archives and record offices, and the ensuing growth of family history societies provided proof that family history truly was the historical practice of the people.

The development of family history was partly driven by diasporan influences. The Second World War introduced people from the British diaspora and the colonies to the country of their ancestors, and in some cases to their relatives, which in turn stimulated genealogical interests. Encouraged by American soldiers asking for information, the idea of setting up a genealogical research bureau within Scotland was mooted as early as the autumn of 1944. In 1945, the non-profit making Scots Ancestry Research Council (SARC) was established by the Labour Secretary of State for Scotland, Tom Johnston, in order to provide a genealogical research service for people with Scottish ancestry. By 1953, SARC had dealt with over ten thousand enquiries from around the globe, including other parts of the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, Africa, India and Europe.²²⁴ It was expressly not for legal purposes, but was set up to help promote the tourist trade. The *Daily Record* reporter, Harold Stewart, praised Johnston's move, which, he wrote, would contribute to the promotion of "commerce in consanguinity". He went on to suggest that there should be "some attempt to satisfy the appetite for colour and romance" by providing links to the land, selling local histories, handiworks, landscapes and – tongue in cheek – even "clumps of the native heath itself."²²⁵

However, SARC was not only set up to promote tourism, but more importantly it was also intended to help foster a sense of Scottish national pride and identity. Johnston was

²²² Stan Newens, 'Family history Societies', *History Workshop Journal*, 11 (1981), 154-59, p. 155.

²²³ Hays, *American Political History as Social Analysis*, p. 406.

²²⁴ National Archives of Scotland, Scottish Home and Health Department, HH1/2814.

²²⁵ Harold Stewart, 'Thar's Gold in Them Thar Pedigrees!', *Daily Record*, 24 March 1945, p. 2.

worried that having seen other countries as part of their war service abroad, Scots would feel unsatisfied with their homeland upon their return. War and modernity were accompanied by a general sense of rootlessness and anonymity. In contrast to the ‘old’ genealogy of heralds and even perhaps the historically erudite genealogy of Round, Stewart argued that the “pedigree seeker of to-day may not be indulging his vanity or curiosity so much as seeking a defence against anonymity, against the rootlessness of mass classification.”²²⁶ In this way, family history was arguably not only driven by heritage tourism and – in Scotland’s case – nationalism, but also by the strains of the modern state and a peculiarly modern nostalgia. As such, it was hoped that genealogy would help returning soldiers feel at home.

In 1975 Lowenthal wrote that for “mobile modern man, nostalgia is not so much being uprooted as having to live in an alien present.”²²⁷ Describing nostalgia as a “rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and of progress”, Svetlana Boym argues that it is “not merely an individual sickness but a symptom of our age, a historical emotion” that is “coeval with modernity itself.”²²⁸ Coterminous with Samuel’s “vertiginous sense of disappearing worlds”, the popularity of family history can be interpreted as a psychological response to the historical events of the early twentieth century.²²⁹ As such, it can be interpreted as both a reaction to modernity and as a product of modernity. Reacting to the effects of alienation brought about through modernization, war and industrialisation, it can be seen as bringing three comforts: firstly, it can be seen as a means of providing a sense of stability of locality or place; secondly, it provides a stable chronology that is focussed on the passing of generations; and thirdly, it provides a sense of strong family values and kinship ties. Overall, it arguably helps to create a “specific private identity that provides shelter from the threats of anonymity.”²³⁰ At the same time it can be viewed as a product of modernity, a modern form of consumerism which endorses the ego-centric and individualistic pursuit of the self and self-fulfilment through family biography. In this way, on the one hand, it can be viewed as a manifestation of a modern nostalgia for ancestral rootedness, and, on the other hand, it can be seen as a sign of the

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ David Lowenthal, 'Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory', *Geographical Review*, 65:1 (1975), 1-36, p. 2.

²²⁸ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), pp. xv-xvi.

²²⁹ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol 1, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 150.

²³⁰ Peter L. Berger and others, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 167.

modern development of psychological individualism and consumerism. In its relation to modernity it has become characterized as a post-Second-World-War phenomenon.²³¹

This interpretation of family history also neatly fits with other general post-war advances such as “more education, more leisure and, in many cases, more spare cash.”²³² The publication of popular genealogical handbooks such as Leslie G. Pine’s *Trace your Ancestors* (1953) and Willis’ *Genealogy for Beginners* (1955) have been celebrated as part of new generation of guides, aimed at the amateur beginner and lauded as the beginnings of democratic access to archives.²³³ Indeed, in 1955 Willis reassured his readers that “there is much in the subject of interest for the ordinary man.”²³⁴ The growth of family history was also accompanied by the opening up of local record offices and the transfer of genealogical sources, such as parish registers into their care. However, I will in the next chapter argue that the development of genealogical access to and use of archives – including the expansion of genealogy as a leisure activity – has longer antecedents. Furthermore, while these factors help to explain and characterize the promotion of family history as a specifically modern post-war phenomenon, this interpretation tends to overlook family history’s connections with ‘genealogy’ and other related pre-Second World War developments, such as eugenics. It also does not completely explain why family history features as a significant cultural activity – after all there are plenty of other hobbies with which people could spend their leisure.

One key feature of family history is its association with wider social narratives, mass media and identity politics. The rise of family history is generally attributed to Alex Haley’s semi-autobiographical novel, *Roots*, which was initially published as a commissioned series for *The Reader’s Digest* in 1974.²³⁵ Haley’s narrative, billed as the “monumental saga of one man’s twelve-year search for his family origins”, tells the story of the Haley family and his search through six generations to his African ancestor, Kunta Kinte.²³⁶ The book sold over one and a half million copies in the first eighteen months –

²³¹ Titley-Bayes.

²³² Ann Chiswell, president of the FFHS, cited by John Carey, 'Light from the shade of a family tree', *The Times*, Saturday 24 March 1984, p. 1.

²³³ Camp, p.7; Titley-Bayes, p.429; Leslie G. Pine, *Trace Your Ancestors* (London: Evans Bros., 1953).

²³⁴ Willis, *Genealogy for Beginners*, p. 10.

²³⁵ Peter Mandler, *History and National Life* (London: Profile Books, 2002), pp. 94-95; Nancy Shute, 'New Routes to Old Roots: twenty-five years after Alex Haley's bestseller topped the charts, millions of Americans are using high-tech tools to find their ancestors', *Smithsonian*, 32:12, March 2002, p. 76; Jacob Young and Maggan Dissly, 'Europe's Genealogy Craze: Do you know your great-grandmother's name?', *Newsweek*, 7 March 1988, pp. 58-59.

²³⁶ Citation from book cover, Alex Haley, *Roots: The Epic Drama of One Man's Search for his Origins*. 6th edn (London: Picador, 1978).

more than any other Afro-American narrative.²³⁷ The publication of the novel in 1976 coincided with the American bicentennial and won a special Pulitzer Prize. Since then, it has been translated into at least thirty-three different languages and published in twenty-eight countries. Hugely popular, the ABC television mini-series of the book attracted an estimated one hundred and thirty million viewers in the United States. Approximately three quarters of the predominately white television audience watched the final episode, making it one of “the most-watched mini-series of all time.”²³⁸ In the UK, *Roots* was serialized in the *Daily Express* and was also first broadcast over the Easter weekend in 1977, attracting over six and a half million viewers on Good Friday, nearly seven million viewers on Easter Day and a total of nineteen million over the whole series.²³⁹

Following *Roots*, so-called “root tracing-kits” became popular.²⁴⁰ In America, *Roots* was credited with giving “a new-found legitimacy to genealogy.”²⁴¹ The US National Archives experienced a one-fifth increase in business, letters of genealogical enquiry tripled and applications to use the facilities increased by forty per cent.²⁴² According to Seattle archivist, Phillip E. Lothyan, applications to archives increased by two hundred per cent in the months following the *Roots* television series.²⁴³ In 1977, a Gallup Poll reported that sixty-nine per cent of Americans were interested in tracing their ancestry.²⁴⁴

In Britain *Roots* was described as the “key event in the transformation of family history from an interest confined to a few or more or less enthusiasts into a discipline with genuine mass appeal.”²⁴⁵ The number of local family history societies peaked in 1976 (see Figure 1). Of the one hundred and twenty-eight local family history societies founded in Britain

²³⁷ David Chioni Moore, 'Routes: Alex Haley's *Roots* and the Rhetoric of Genealogy', *Transition*, 64 (1994), 4-21, p. 8.

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 6; Helen Taylor, 'The Griot from Tennessee: The saga of Alex Haley's *Roots*', *Critical Quarterly*, 37:2 (1995), 51-62, p. 48.

²³⁹ Peter Keighron, 'US TV: the classics and the clangers - US imports - Trash or Triumph?', *Broadcast*, 26 November 2004, pp. 18-19, p. 19.

²⁴⁰ Taylor, 'The Griot from Tennessee: The saga of Alex Haley's *Roots*', p. 48.

²⁴¹ David G. Null, 'Genealogy and Family History in the Academic Library', *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 11:1 (1985), 29-33, p. 29.

²⁴² Leslie Fishbein, 'Roots: Docudrama and the Interpretation of History', in *Why Docudrama? Fact-Fiction on Film and TV*, ed. by Alan Rosenthal (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1999), pp. 271-95, p. 281; David A. Gerber, 'Haley's *Roots* and our own: An Inquiry into the Nature of a Popular Phenomenon', *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 5:3 (1977), 87-111, p. 87.

²⁴³ Cited by Neal S. Southwick, 'Family History: Career or Hobby?', *World Conference on Records Preserving our Heritage* (Genealogical Society of Utah: Salt Lake City, Utah, 12-15 August 1980).

²⁴⁴ Null, 'Genealogy and Family History in the Academic Library', p. 30.

²⁴⁵ Carey, 'Light from the shade of a family tree'; Null, 'Genealogy and Family History in the Academic Library', p. 29.

between 1861 and 2006, sixty-six per cent were founded after 1976. Before the publication of *Roots*, the PRO did not record genealogy as a readers' subject, although local history and biography were noted as interests.²⁴⁶ Yet by 1979, the PRO was more cognisant of genealogy. A five per cent sample of readers' tickets between 1977 and 1978 showed that genealogy was the most popular subject of research, representing the interests of half of readers.²⁴⁷ However, it must also be borne in mind that the number of new societies was rising in the years before the publication of *Roots*. In 1974 the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) was established to co-ordinate the work of more than one hundred family history groups from all over the Western world.

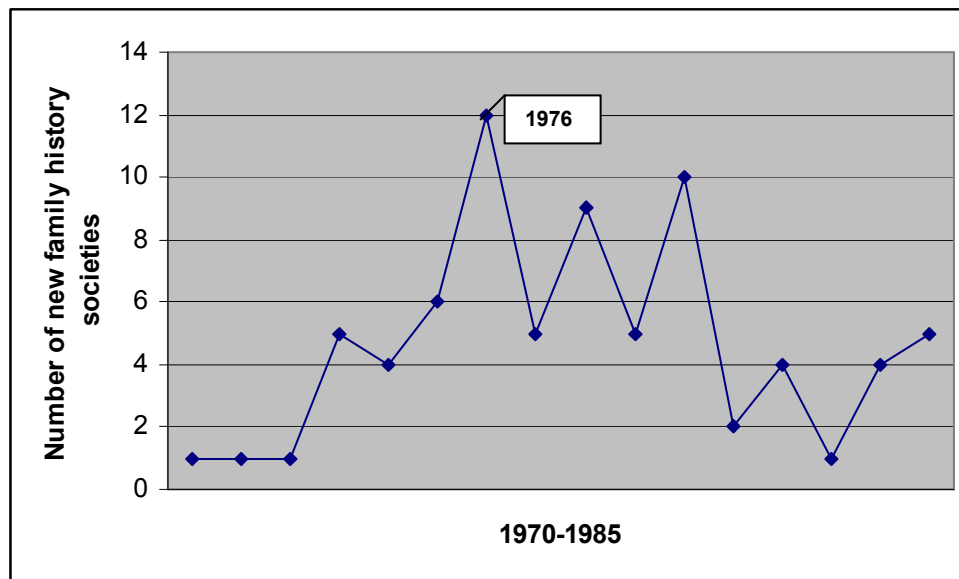


Figure 1

Number of new family history societies founded in Britain between 1970 and 1985²⁴⁸

The societies' use of the term 'family history' rather than 'genealogy' signaled the fact that a new, broader kind of genealogy was being practiced. As Hickman, a member of the Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry, wrote in 1974:

²⁴⁶ Public Record Office., *13th, Report of the Advisory Council on Public Records, 1971 (Public Record Office)*. Vol. XXXIV.493, *House of Commons Papers; Reports of Commissioners* (London: HMSO, 1971) p. 14, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:fulltext:1971-060487> [accessed 10 April 2009].

²⁴⁷ Public Record Office., *Twentieth Annual Report 1978 & the Twentieth Report of the Advisory Council on Public Records 1978, House of Commons Papers* (London: HMSO, 1979) p. 4, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:fulltext:1979-071317> [accessed 10 April 2009].

²⁴⁸ Information provided from FFHS' database by Maggie Loughran, Joint administrator, FHSS, 2 December 2008.

During recent years there has been a trend from pure genealogy to applied genealogy – family history. A good deal of research efforts have been devoted to recent generations and seeking out every snippet of information concerning them in an attempt to build up a picture of the sort of folk they were and the sort of lives they led. This has in turn led to a much wider interest in social history.²⁴⁹

This new focus was not only on “establishing from documentary evidence the relationship between people”, but also on relating “a grouping of people to their environmental and socio-economical surroundings.”²⁵⁰ It was seen as a grassroots movement that in turn fed into academic research – in particular social history. In 1980 Taylor wrote that: “Most genealogists are meticulous and their collective contribution could become a valuable resource for the quantitative historian and sociologist concerned with family reconstruction, record linkage and the study of the family in the aggregate.”²⁵¹

Because, in this respect, family history was about uncovering the story of those who had been silenced within the official records, it was also closely associated with the rise in oral history. In order to recover his family’s lost links with the Gambia, Haley relied upon linguistic traces passed down orally through his family. There were stories of an African described by Chicken George, who said “his name was *Kin-tay*, who called the river *Kamby Bolongo*, and a guitar *ko*, and who said he was chopping wood when he was captured.”²⁵² With the publication of *Roots* and the planned establishment of the Kinte Foundation and the Kinte Black Genealogical Library, Haley hoped that his work would:

... project a tremendous new emphasis and public awareness of and public image – worldwide – of oral history. We also hope to be able to project a worldwide a correction of something that plagues not just black history but history for everybody, and that is that history has predominately been written by the winners, which messes it up from the very beginning. Here now is a vehicle that I hope will be able to spread an awareness that black history is not just some euphemistic cry on the part of a people trying to make some spurious case for themselves, but that it does happen to be a matter of disciplined documented dedicated truth.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ 'Hickman', Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry., *Personally Speaking about this Ancestry Business* (Birmingham: Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry, 1974), p. 113.

²⁵⁰ Camp, 'Genealogy: The Construction of Family Histories', p. 13.

²⁵¹ Taylor, 'Family History: Some new directions and their implications for the archivist', pp. 228-29.

²⁵² Alex Haley, 'Black History, Oral History, and Genealogy', *The Oral History Review*, 1 (1973), 1-25, p. 5.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 25. For a description of the Kunta Kinte - Alex Haley Foundation, see <<http://www.kintehaley.org/foundation.html>> [accessed 26 November 2008].

The above citation was based on an address Haley gave at the Seventh Annual Colloquium on Oral History at Austin Texas, 10 November 1972, which was published in the first volume of the *Oral History Review* in 1973. Haley's speech has since become a founding document within oral historiography. Twenty-five years later, an extract from this text was used as the first text in the *Oral History Reader* (1998), edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson.²⁵⁴ Previously, attention within oral history had been focused on the reliability of oral evidence and the fallibility of memory, but during the 1970s, there was a new appreciation of memory, personal experiential know-how, and the potentially liberating effects of studying history. In 1972 Michael Frisch argued that memory should become the object of historical analysis and not merely the method of oral history, thereby making oral history "a powerful tool for discovering, exploring, and evaluating the nature of the process of historical memory – how people make sense of their past, how they connect individual experience and its social context, how the past becomes part of the present, and how people use it to interpret their lives and the world around them."²⁵⁵

To a limited extent, within this environment, family history also became part of the British academy and formal learning. In particular, it made a larger impact in post-war school education where it was seen as a useful pedagogical tool for introducing school children to history and local geography. With its opportune use of documentary sources and oral history it also matched the "1960s pedagogic enthusiasm for project-work and learning-by-doing."²⁵⁶ In 1968, eighteen Berkshire and Hampshire primary and secondary school teachers from eleven schools collaborated in Donald Steel and Lawrence Taylor's *Family History in Schools: An Interdisciplinary Experiment*. Describing family history as "the ancestor and root of all other forms of historical enquiry", Steel and Taylor argued that the project had an "intrinsic importance and interest" for children, not least because they can become "deeply involved in the past only if they feel kinship with their ancestors."²⁵⁷ This last comment implies that family history was not just about the study of history, nor was it about emulating forebears, but rather it was about seeking a deep, intrinsic involvement with the past that stemmed from a notion of kinship. This was based on the general assumption that a sense of kinship and of family feeling was primarily positive, an emotive impulse which could be un-problematically applied to the activity of studying history.

²⁵⁴ Alex Haley, 'Black history, oral history and genealogy', in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 9-20.

²⁵⁵ Michael Frisch cited by Alistair Thomson, 'Fifty Years On: An International Perspective on Oral History', *The Journal of American History*, 85:2 (1998), 581-95, pp. 585-86.

²⁵⁶ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol 1, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, p. 149.

²⁵⁷ Donald J. Steel and Lawrence Taylor, *Family History in Schools* (London: Phillimore, 1973), pp. 5-6.

At the same time, the use of family history in the school curriculum perhaps subtly reinforced the notion that it was a childish activity; one that was not as hard or as weighty as ‘proper’ history. As such, the argument for its introduction was based on the premise that it was an activity that would easily lead from personal micro-level concerns, to shared macro-level concerns. Steel and Taylor argued that a child’s acquaintance with their own family history gave them a unique access to a “living history laboratory” in which they would not only encounter different kinds of source material, but also be acquainted with “more technological, scientific, economic, and social changes than in the whole previous history of mankind.”²⁵⁸ Yet the image of the laboratory – as an objective scientific space in which the observed object reveals laws that can be applied to the larger world outside – presents a contradiction. Often during genealogical research one has to confront social, moral and ethical issues, such as slavery, illegitimacy and adoption. It is also common to reach a brick wall. Not every child would be confronting the same ‘object’. Furthermore, basing the definition of the family upon the patrilineal logic of genealogy is contestable. While these complexities arguably add value to the learning experience, they also frustrate the notion of a simple relation between personal family and national history.

Steel and Taylor’s work should be considered in the light of developments within the academy, as under the influence of the rise of sociology and feminism, the history of the family and the history of childhood became objects of investigation.²⁵⁹ In the 1960s, the specialized development of the history of childhood led by the French *Annalist*, Phillippe Ariès, was taken up in Britain by Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt. Their publication, *Children in English Society* (1969), which outlined the history of social concern for children, was initiated by a series of postgraduate lectures at London University for students intending to practice in the field of Child Care Services. From this, it was discovered that there was little research in historical sociology.²⁶⁰ This was remedied during the 1970s by interdisciplinary and heterogeneous research, which investigated the structure and unit of the family in terms of demographical, social, economic, legal and psychobehavioral change.²⁶¹ Whilst academics, such as Peter Laslett, Edward Shorter and

²⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

²⁵⁹ Null, 'Genealogy and Family History in the Academic Library', p. 31.

²⁶⁰ Phillippe Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime* (Paris: Plon, 1960); Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society* (London: Routledge Kegan and Paul, 1969).

²⁶¹ Katherine A. Lynch, 'The family and the history of public life', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 24:4 (1994), 665-77, p. 665, *Expanded Academic ASAP:Gale*, <<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=EAIM>> [accessed 2 October 2007].

Stone, did not explicitly use genealogy, they nevertheless opened up the academy to a general interest in familial and domestic history.²⁶²

Genealogy was specifically furthered by the herald, Sir Anthony Richard Wagner (1908-1995), who – like Round before him – promoted the use of scientific genealogy to service history. His *English Genealogy* (1960), described by *The Times* as “the dynamic portraiture of a people, tracing the growth and decline not only of families but of classes and callings”, put genealogy forward as a subject worthy of academic interest.²⁶³ In *Pedigree and Progress: Essays in the genealogical interpretation of history* (1975), Wagner went further by seeking to demonstrate how genealogy could shed light on the rise and expansion of social class. In a postscript to *Pedigree and Progress* he referred to the foundation of a large comprehensive survey in English surnames which would enlist the work of many genealogical and local history volunteers to index and link surnames of people recorded in tax returns. Co-ordinated and overseen by academics, the survey would draw upon etymological, distributional and genealogical methods and would be used as “a foundation of a history of English families in general.”²⁶⁴ Wagner hoped that the project would shed light on whether people from different classes with the same surname were related by blood or not, which in turn would highlight the development of class structure.²⁶⁵ The project came to fruition in 1965 when it was established at the Department of Local History at Leicester University through support from the Marc Fitch Fund.²⁶⁶

Such surveys were enabled by advances in information technology. In cliometrics, a significant development was the work carried out by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure (CAMPOP).²⁶⁷ Founded by Tony Wrigley and Peter Laslett in 1964, the aim of this group was to examine the period between the introduction

²⁶² Peter Laslett, *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

²⁶³ 'What is Tradition?', *The Times*, Saturday 5 March 1960, p. 7.

²⁶⁴ Wagner, *Pedigree and Progress: Essays in the Genealogical Interpretation of History*, p. 148.

²⁶⁵ The distinction between family and non-family, however, is not just a simple case of working out who was related by blood and who was not. Aside from servants taking their master's names, illegitimacy and adoption, there are other historical factors that influenced naming practices, such as the choosing of Christian surnames by god-parents and the sharing of names by god-siblings. George Redmonds, 'Name of the game: George Redmonds explains the value of taking a historical approach to the study of names', *History Today*, 54:9 (2004), 5, *Expanded Academic ASAP:Gale*, <<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=EAIM>> [accessed 2 October 2007].

²⁶⁶ Wagner, *Pedigree and Progress: Essays in the Genealogical Interpretation of History*, p. 154.

²⁶⁷ Michael Drake, 'Inside-Out or Outside-In: The Case of Family and Local History', in *Participating in the Knowledge Society: Researchers Beyond the University Walls*, ed. by Ruth Finnegan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 110 -23; Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol 1, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, p. 148.

of parish registers in 1538 and the beginning of civil registration in 1837. With the help of an army of volunteer amateur genealogists and local historians, information was extrapolated from the registers of four hundred and four parishes. This sample underwent a process of “family reconstitution” involving computer manipulation and statistical analysis to provide a historical picture of the English population.²⁶⁸ Whilst academic interest in the history of the family overlapped with genealogy and family history, this research differed in that it was the social pattern and development of the institution of the family, and the characteristics of the population in general that was sought. CAMPOP was highly reliant upon and indebted to the labour of antiquarian volunteers; nevertheless, the knowledge was produced within, and distinguished by, the academy. As such, family history was perceived to have “passed out of the hands of the antiquarian into those of the economic and social historian.”²⁶⁹

Family history found its academic home in an organization which shared its open access ethos, shared extra-mural links with the activities of family history societies, and which also harnessed technology to provide distance learning. Born as an idea in the 1960s and developed under the leadership of a Labour government, the Open University aimed to provide high quality education on a distance and part-time basis to all, regardless of class, age or social status. After the Institute of Genealogical and Heraldic Studies at Canterbury,²⁷⁰ it was the second to set up a formal course and the first to provide a series of final year undergraduate courses in family history in 1974. Known as DA301, this programme, however, differed from the Canterbury syllabus in that it synthesized family history and local history and drew upon the theory and practice of demographers, political scientists and sociologists.²⁷¹ The course began with “the student’s natural interest in his or her own family” and then moved swiftly on “to set this within the broader context of families generally”, creating “the personal and parochial within the broader framework of academic understanding.”²⁷² This progression was reflected in the accompanying course titles, *From Family Tree to Family History* and *From Family History to Community History*.²⁷³ Whilst family history had found a small place within the academic syllabus, it

²⁶⁸ E. A. Wrigley and others, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (London: Edward Arnold for the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, 1981).

²⁶⁹ Peter Spufford, 'Genealogy and the Historian', *Genealogist's Magazine*, 15 (1967), 431-37, p. 445.

²⁷⁰ Cecil R. Humphery-Smith, 'The Teaching of Genealogy', *Archivum*, 37 (1992), 130-39.

²⁷¹ Michael Drake, email to author, 18 September 2007.

²⁷² Michael Drake, 'The Democratisation of Historical Research: The case for DA301', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 17:2 (1996), 201-07, pp. 202-03.

²⁷³ Ruth H. Finnegan and Michael Drake, *From Family Tree to Family History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press in association with The Open University, 1994); W. T. R. Pryce, *From Family History to*

was still seen as part of and often subservient to other sub-disciplines, such as the history of the family, local history, social history, demography and public history. In this way, this course was part of a more general trend towards the fragmentation of history into sub-disciplines.

Whilst family history was to some extent accepted by the academy – albeit as a sub-discipline, or as a source of amateur labour – its characterization as a “startling discovery” is partly connected with its close association with popular media and new technology.²⁷⁴ Like the academy, social networking is a well-established aspect of family history research, as genealogists seek others who are working on various branches or localities of particular surnames, and wish to share findings, resources and advice. Genealogists, who are often dispersed and diasporan, also benefit from the comparison of large amounts of data. In these respects, it is particularly suited to the online environment. Online genealogy began in 1983 with newsgroups net.roots and ROOTS-L, the latter of which has since developed into the popular Rootsweb.²⁷⁵ By 2000, an estimated half of all Internet users, or thirty-five million people, undertook family history research online and in 2002 Alexander Stille ranked it as the second most popular activity on the Internet.²⁷⁶ Family history represents an important niche market for information. With digitization of archival material, many sources can now be accessed online and numerous commercial genealogical sites have developed to provide this service, and more, including, “maps, mailing lists, newsgroups, chat rooms, family trees, country-specific sites, fake coats of arms, ethnic group sites, surname lists, professional researchers and pay-for-help services.”²⁷⁷ A main index to online sources is *Cyndi's List*, which was set up by Cyndi Howell in 1996. By 1998 it had received ten million visitors. Ten years later, *Cyndi's List* contains links to over two hundred and sixty-five thousand sites and it takes at least twelve hours a day to keep up-to-date.²⁷⁸

Community History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press in association with the Open University, 1994).

²⁷⁴ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol 1, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, p. 19.

²⁷⁵ Peter Christian, *The Genealogist's Internet*. 3rd edn (Kew: The National Archives, 2005), p. 4.

²⁷⁶ 'Recent Maritz poll shows explosion in popularity of genealogy', *Genealogy.com* (16 May 2000), <<http://www.genealogy.com/genealogy/press-051600.html?Welcome=1049522721>> [accessed 6 June 2006]; Alexander Stille, *The Future of the Past: How the Information Age Threatens to Destroy our Cultural Heritage* (London: Picador, 2002), p. 330.

²⁷⁷ Shute, 'New Routes to Old Roots: twenty-five years after Alex Haley's bestseller topped the charts, millions of Americans are using high-tech tools to find their ancestors', p. 76.

²⁷⁸ Cyndi Howells, *Cyndi's List of Genealogical Sites on the Internet*, (2008) <<http://www.cyndislist.com/>> [accessed 22 November 2008].

New technologies such as the relational database and the Internet are widely celebrated as ushering in the new age of family history research. Chris Pomery writes that:

For years, family historians ... have lived largely in the twilight realm of the archive office, quarrying for documentary records whose relevance to their personal quest may be years away from realization. Already in the past decade the internet has dramatically increased the amount of documentary data available to researchers, so much so that the newest generation now expect to turbocharge their genealogy by instantly accessing huge online transcription projects and databases of family trees.²⁷⁹

At the same time as the Internet was becoming widely introduced, so was the new technology of DNA testing. Both these new technologies have not only opened up the genealogical marketplace further, but have also increased the status of family history. As Pomery notes, “the new set of data revealed in our DNA results has the power to transform genealogy within the growing business of popular history from a slightly dowdy poor cousin into a much loved and respected uncle.”²⁸⁰ New technology has also enabled individuals to participate in the creation of large corpus of data, thereby, arguably making family history more universal and relevant. Pomery writes that by harnessing the DNA data and the Internet, family history, “like astronomy” has become “genuinely an area where an amateur enthusiast can have a significant impact on humanity’s overall understanding.”²⁸¹

DNA-Genealogy

From the late 1990s, techniques used in genetics have opened up a new area of genealogical research.²⁸² Put simply, ‘DNA-genealogy’ – also known variously as ‘deep genealogy’, ‘genetic genealogy’, ‘anthrogenealogy’, ‘genetealogy’, or ‘personal interest genomics’ – is the application of DNA testing and population genetics to recreational genealogical research.²⁸³ From 2000 onwards, DNA testing and services explaining the meaning of the tests have become widely available commercially to genealogists,

²⁷⁹ Chris Pomery, *DNA and Family History: How Genetic Testing Can Advance Your Genealogical Research* (Kew: The National Archives, 2004), p. 1.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p.3.

²⁸¹ Ibid., p.vii.

²⁸² Ibid., p.2.

²⁸³ Catherine Nash, "'Recreational genetics', race and relatedness", *L'Observatoire de la génétique*, 24 (2005), p. 3, *IRCM:Centre de Bioéthique*,
<http://www.ircm.qc.ca/bioethique/obsgenetique/zoom/zoom_05/z_no24_05/za_no24_05_02.html>
[accessed 20 October 2008].

principally in the US and the UK, who wish to discover their personal genetic heritage.²⁸⁴ There are three main parts of DNA that can be tested: Y-chromosome DNA (Y-DNA), mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and autosomal DNA. Over time, various different mutations, or genetic polymorphisms in the DNA structure appear during replication. Changes that appear on strands of so-called 'junk-DNA', which makes up approximately ninety per cent of the gene sequence, do not have any apparent function and appear to have no visible effect. It is the number of different kinds of mutations in junk-DNA that are tested at certain markers in the gene sequence to provide what are termed as 'allele values' which can be compared to see if two people share common ancestry.

Y-DNA is the most useful and the most popular testing amongst genealogists because the Y chromosome is passed down the male line, from father to son. This mirrors the pattern of surname inheritance which has been common in the UK from about the twelfth century onwards. Whilst in 1997 research had been carried out into the shared allele values found on the Y-chromosome within the Cohanim, (a Jewish priesthood which is restricted to the direct line of male descent), the first study to specifically combine genealogical information on surnames and DNA results was published in 2000 by Bryan Sykes, who is based at the Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Oxford.²⁸⁵ He studied DNA samples taken from men who shared the same surname of Sykes from West Yorkshire, Cheshire and Lancashire, and discovered that approximately fifty per cent also shared the same Y-chromosome haplotype which indicated that they most likely shared the same common ancestor.²⁸⁶

In recent years, hundreds of grassroots regional and surname studies using Y-chromosome DNA tests have been set up.²⁸⁷ These are largely carried out using the services of commercial companies who also offer information and online social networking services in order to encourage sales. A significant part of the genetic genealogy movement is the

²⁸⁴ To date, the principle current companies are: Family Tree DNA (www.familytreedna.com/), Oxford Ancestors (www.oxfordancestors.com), Ethnoancestry (www.ethnoancestry.com), African Ancestry (www.africanancestry.com), DNA Heritage (www.dnaheritage.com), and Relative Genetics (www.relativegenetics.com). David C. Mountain and Jeanne Kay Guelke, 'Genetics, Genealogy, and Geography', in *Geography and Genealogy: Locating Personal Pasts*, ed. by Dallen J. Timothy and Jeanne Kay Guelke (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 153-73, p. 155.

²⁸⁵ Karl Skorecki and others, 'Y Chromosomes of Jewish Priests', *Nature*, 385 (1997), 32.

²⁸⁶ The surname Sykes means, 'stream', 'boundary ditch' or 'spring'. Bryan Sykes and Catherine Irven, 'Surnames and the Y Chromosome', *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, 66:4 (2000), 1417-19, *PubMed Central* <<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=1288207&blobtype=pdf>> [accessed 19 November 2008].

²⁸⁷ Chris Pomery, *List of Y-Chromosome DNA Studies Undertaken by Family Historians*, (<<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~allpoms/genetics1a.html>> [accessed 20 October 2008].

creation of online groups or family reconstruction projects. One of the largest DNA companies that claims to carry out ninety per cent of all DNA-genealogy tests worldwide, Family Tree DNA states on its European website: “Our large database provides you with the possibility of finding genetic cousins, i.e. people with whom you have common ancestors.”²⁸⁸

Other Y-DNA studies have originated within the academy. Geneticist, Professor David Goldstein, from the University College London (UCL) tested the Y-DNA of two thousand men from twenty-five different locations in Britain. The results of the survey were featured in the BBC television programme *Blood of the Vikings* which was first broadcast in November 2001. Following this, a team of academic researchers led by Patrick Guinness and including geneticists and etymologists, from the Universities of Leicester and Nottingham sought to find evidence of Norse ancestry in the Wirral and West Lancashire. Launched in 2002 and funded by the UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, the Wirral and West Lancashire Viking DNA Project involved testing the Y-DNA of men with either surnames associated with the area or with genealogical histories prior to 1700.²⁸⁹

The other two types of test are more concerned with what is termed ‘deep ancestry’ or ‘ancestry heritage’. Unlike Y-DNA tests, these are less specific, both chronologically and geographically. These tests use the other two types of DNA: MtDNA, which is passed through the mitochondria from mothers to their children, and autosomal DNA, which is inherited from both parents and recombined to make up the other pairs of chromosomes. In comparison to Y-DNA, which can indicate changes which happened in the last five hundred years, MtDNA mutates very slowly and so sheds light on common ancestry established hundreds and tens of thousands of years ago.²⁹⁰ Unlike MtDNA and the Y chromosome, the pattern of inheritance of autosomal DNA does not represent a direct lineage because it is made up of recombined DNA from both parents. For example, autosomal DNA could represent between naught to fifty per cent of one’s grandparent’s DNA. As such, companies that offer autosomal tests provide a composite picture of one’s ancestry, which is linked to highly-generalized continental groups.

²⁸⁸ ‘Frequently Asked Questions’, *iGenea website*, (<<http://www.igene.com/genealogie-dna-fragen-antworten-ahnenforschung-29.htm>> [accessed 1 June 2008].

²⁸⁹ Georgina R. Bowden and others, ‘Excavating Past Population Structures by Surname-Based Sampling: The Genetic Legacy of the Vikings in Northwest England’, *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, 25 (2008), 301-09, <<http://mbe.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/25/2/301.pdf>> [accessed 15 November 2008].

²⁹⁰ Pomery, *DNA and Family History: How Genetic Testing Can Advance Your Genealogical Research*, p. 15.

Often DNA testing acts in a supplementary fashion, offering genealogists both a way of scientifically testing their interpretations and assumptions, and as way of defining research goals, by either defining boundaries of research, or creating new research avenues when the paper trail has gone cold. The latter is pertinent for many communities who face gaps in the record, particularly for those for whom such silence represents cultural oppression and slavery. When Jendayi Serwah, a Briton with Afro-Caribbean heritage, had her mtDNA tested her African ancestry was finally vindicated. Through comparison with a piece of genetic coding, an external reference that linked her to Africa was created. In this way, DNA testing functioned like an archival documentary source. Sykes describes how her DNA “had become a document for her African identity, literally and silently smuggled past the plantation owners for generation after generation within the bodies of her own ancestors.”²⁹¹ For others, like Charles F. Kerchner, the rewards of DNA testing are not so politically and emotionally charged. They are more practically self-evident and:

... are obvious for the genealogist ... those being, to either confirm or rebuke the theory that two people are related through a common ancestor. The value in this is immense ... given the amount of time and expense that most genealogical enthusiasts spend on this consuming hobby. Why travel to Germany or England to search for records of people who might be related to you when you can insure that each hour spent will be invested on record collecting for absolute members of your extended family.²⁹²

However, the same technology that is called upon to verify and define genealogical research also frustrates genealogy’s supposed natural order and brings into question what constitutes ‘absolute’ and ‘family’. Whilst DNA-technology has given scientific validity to family history and can, on one level, be seen as a practical tool for sorting out degrees and proof of relation, it also paradoxically questions what relatedness – whether family, clan, nation, race or tribe – means. After all, what does it mean to be an absolute member of an extended family?

The introduction of DNA-genealogy and computerized information has challenged the traditional notion of the archive, as each has become a metaphor for the other. Passarge describes DNA as the “read-only memory of the genetic information system.” He goes on to write that “genetic code is highly analogous to a text and is amenable to being stored in

²⁹¹ Bryan Sykes, 'Fragments of Identity', in *College Record 2006-2007*, ed. by [Wolfson College] (Oxford: Wolfson College, 2007), pp. 91-95, p. 94.

²⁹² Charles F. Kerchner, 'Genetics & Genealogy - An Introduction, With Some DNA Case Study Examples', *International Society of Genetic Genealogy Website* (2008), <<http://www.kerchner.com/anonftp/pub/introg&g.htm>> [accessed 1 June 2008].

computers.”²⁹³ Similarly, DNA material has been likened to an archive. Himla Soodyall, Bharti Morar and Trefor Jenkins, write that the “body, through its DNA, constitutes an archive, with a narrative of our prehistory and evolutionary past.”²⁹⁴ Both the body and the computer become ‘stores’ or archives of information which iteratively give meaning to the other; the body contains DNA, which can be deciphered and compared to other patterns of DNA through the electronic database, giving meaning and providing narratives of identity for individuals and groups. As Paul Brodwin notes, however, “the passage from nucleotide to protein to anatomical structure to behaviour to self-conscious, historically-emergent notion of ethnic distinction is very long indeed.”²⁹⁵ I view this passage of DNA-testing as a process of archivization, which is intrinsically related to the conception of identity. It is this archivization of knowledge and the development of genealogical narratives that I will explore in Chapter Three.

Nash argues that genealogy is “as much about ideas of human origins and difference as it is about senses of personal identity and family history.”²⁹⁶ Rather than focus on the novelty of the technological developments of online activity and DNA-genealogy, I trace the notion of the heredity body to before the twentieth century. Thus Chapter Two offers an analysis of the mapping of the private body to the national, social body, which was achieved through the utilitarian discourses of eugenics, statistics and photography. This is interpreted as a move that contributed to the development of both national archives through civil registration, and to the development of domestic archives, such as family photograph albums. In Chapter Three, I will examine individual narratives involving DNA-genealogy in order to investigate the connection between archives and identity in more detail. But before doing so, however, the idea of heritage – and personal heritage in particular – needs to be examined.

Personal heritage

In recent years, the term ‘personal heritage’ has emerged in association with family history. In an article on heritage tourism, Dallen highlighted it as an un-researched area, in which family history featured as an important part of people’s wider connections with

²⁹³ Eberhard Passarge and Jürgen Wirth, *Color Atlas of Genetics*. 2nd edn (Stuttgart: Thieme, 2001), p. 2.

²⁹⁴ Himla Soodyall and others, 'The Human Genome as Archive: Some Illustrations from the South', in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. by Carolyn Hamilton (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), pp. 179-91, pp. 179-80.

²⁹⁵ Paul Brodwin, 'Genetics, Identity, and the Anthropology of Essentialism', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 75:2 (2002), 323-30, p. 328.

²⁹⁶ Nash, "'Recreational genetics', race and relatedness", p. 4, *IRCM*.

historic sites.²⁹⁷ Broadly speaking, 'personal heritage' can be defined as the valued intangible and tangible things, places and memories which a person may wish to pass on to future generations. To some extent the term encompasses the traditional definition of heritage as that "which comes from the circumstances of birth; an inherited lot or portion; the condition or state transmitted from ancestors."²⁹⁸ Ancestry and inheritance are important to the notion of heritage, but the focus of what is being passed on has changed. Today, it is more likely to be property of a different kind which one might wish to pass on; one's personal heritage is more likely to consist of genes, cultural, ethnic and religious values, ephemera, memories, tradition and identity, rather than houses, titles or land.²⁹⁹

'Heritage' is also commonly used in place of the politically-charged term 'race', in that people are more likely to refer to themselves as being of 'mixed' or 'dual heritage' rather than 'mixed race.' At the same time, for others the hyphenated or dual heritage description is irrelevant, as Timothy notes: "Many people in today's western societies, however, are 'mongrels' of sorts, comprised of many mixed ethnicities and diasporic lineages, so that such clear-cut hyphenations and identities are less relevant."³⁰⁰ However, the use of the term 'dual heritage' can be seen in a story submitted to the TNA's *Moving Here* website by Amanda Huxtable in 2006, who describes herself as "Black British" and as having a dual inheritance of "politics, creativity, language, food, fashion, music, sport, comedy, art, cultural activities etc" from both Jamaica and Britain. She writes: "Being born in a place does not mean you're from that place. You do not inherit all that is there. My family is from Jamaica but I can not inherit all that is there either."³⁰¹ Whilst Huxtable is ambivalent about the elements which she may or may not inherit from either country and about the

²⁹⁷ Jules Hudson and Nick Barratt, 'The rise and rise of family history: Jules Hudson and Nick Barratt examine why family history has become the flavour of the month, as the 'Who Do You Think You Are? Live' event at Olympia on May 5th-7th will make evident', *History Today*, 57:4 (2007), 20, *Expanded Academic ASAP:Gale*, <<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=EAIM>> [accessed 2 October 2007]; Dallen J. Timothy, 'Tourism and the personal heritage experience', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24:3 (1997), 751-54.

²⁹⁸ 'Heritage', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (1989), <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50105205?query_type=word&queryword=heritage&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&search_id=V5eA-xeqePq-5398&result_place=1> [accessed 11 October 2008].

²⁹⁹ Gillis, 'Heritage and History: Twins Separated at Birth', p. 375.

³⁰⁰ Dallen J. Timothy, 'Genealogical Mobility: Tourism and the Search for a Personal Past', in *Geography and genealogy: locating personal pasts*, ed. by Dallen J. Timothy and Jeanne Kay Guelke (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 115-35, p. 117.

³⁰¹ Amanda Huxtable, 'Definitions of identity and family heritage', in *Moving Here: Stories* (The National Archives, 2006), <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/stories/Story_YMH_AfroCarib01/Story_YMH_AfroCarib01.htm?identifier=stories/Story_YMH_AfroCarib01/Story_YMH_AfroCarib01.htm> [accessed 14 October 2008].

limitations of what she can lay claim to, her notion of heritage is closely bound up with her identity, which is seen as a project of self-discovery and desire:

I am looking to the future where I can discover my African heritage. However, I am clear on my expectations. I concede that some things are lost forever. This leaves us the task of exploring and archiving ourselves now for the heritage yet to come.³⁰²

The task of “exploring and archiving ourselves now for the heritage yet to come” is temporally orientated towards the future and expresses a sense of creativity and agency. Here, there is not only a quest for self-knowledge but also self-fulfillment.

The activity of archiving the self “for the heritage yet to come” can be seen in the creation of online sites and services. The TV-genealogist and journalist, Nick Barratt’s *Nations’ Memorybank* is described on *Wikipedia* as a “personal heritage site.”³⁰³ It was designed as an online space where people could upload and share their personal heritage digitally. Launched in 2007, the *Nations’ Memorybank* was intended to appeal to both family historians – typically characterized as the ‘saga generation’ – and to younger people, used to online social networking sites, such as *myspace.com*, *Flickr* and *facebook.com*. Extolling people to consider themselves as “living archives” individuals were invited to deposit their memories and “as much information as we can about our ancestors, our former homes, the places we grew up” into the *Memorybank*. As well as offering private online space to share and archive material, the site also offers other networking services such as forums, communities based around broad subjects of interest, and memory mapping. The project has yet to become a success and its slow take-up might be due to the fact that it is competing with more well-established sites that already offer similar services, such as the BBC’s *Memoryshare*.³⁰⁴

The *Nations’ Memorybank* is different, however, in that it explicitly offers archival services. The website argues that:

... our experiences, impressions and thoughts ... are important to us as individuals, but have a far greater relevance when brought together - yet so few of us bother to record our daily lives any more. Yet, as living archives, we almost have a duty to future generations to deposit this information somewhere

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ 'Nick Barratt', *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Barratt> [accessed 21 October 2008].

³⁰⁴ BBC, *Memoryshare*, (2007) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/memoryshare.html>> [accessed 20 June 2009].

so that they can better understand who we were as individuals, and collectively as a society.³⁰⁵

However, archivization in order to engender collective or even individual significance is perhaps not so easy to achieve. Many items are posted without much context and with minimum curatorial control, making the opposite appear to be true. Arguably, one's "experiences, impressions and thoughts" have a far greater relevance when kept within the original context of Everyman's "little Private Record Office", at home, rather than online.³⁰⁶ The danger is that the presentation of such collections on the Internet perhaps has the effect of producing a kind of levelling where everything is viewed "to be equally important, and consequently the individual thing to be too important." This lack of hierarchy and privileging re-evokes Nietzsche's "blind nostalgia" of the antiquarian, who develops a "blind mania to collect, of a restless gathering together of everything that once existed."³⁰⁷

A 'new antiquarianism'?

To some extent we have come full circle as the figure of the antiquarian again emerges. Woolf makes the comparison between sixteenth and seventeenth century antiquarianism and current trends within historical practice, writing that the "current vogue for a social and cultural history focused on the material, anecdotal, and mundane, and the postmodern questioning of boundaries between history and fiction, show that those recessive genes in historiography's past have a strong capacity to resurface."³⁰⁸ The "recessive genes" of antiquarianism – epitomised by a general interest in memory, the tangible past and everyday things – can be interpreted as a reinvention of antiquarianism. But is it correct to draw such a comparison? Sweet argues that eighteenth-century antiquarians should not be tarred with the modern-day brush of the heritage industry, making the point that "antiquaries should not be regarded as the eighteenth-century equivalent of stamp collectors or devotees of Civil War re-enactments."³⁰⁹ She does, however, draw a comparison between eighteenth-century and present-day family and local history, connecting them both with an active engagement with national history, writing that:

³⁰⁵ 'Archive your life', *Nations' Memorybank*, (2007), <<http://www.nationsmemorybank.com/editorial/campaign.html>> [accessed 28 November 2008].

³⁰⁶ Carl Becker, 'Everyman His Own Historian', *The American Historical Review*, 37:2 (1932), 221-36, p. 224, *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1838208>> [accessed 24 November 2008].

³⁰⁷ Nietzsche, 'On the Utility and Liability of History for Life', p. 137.

³⁰⁸ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, p. 399.

³⁰⁹ Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, p. xvi.

For many people in the eighteenth century their active engagement with national history lay not so much in reading a volume of Rapin or Hume, but in the pursuit of local history and antiquities. Given the popularity of local and family history today, this should come as no surprise to us.³¹⁰

Whilst Sweet resists making past and present trends equivalent, she does recognize that there are some human tendencies that do have some continuity. In this respect, family history or personal heritage can be simply interpreted as a fundamental unchanging interest in the local. A greater interest in the personal and the proximally near, to one's close relations, as opposed to a distant national history, can perhaps be taken as a general principle that can be understood throughout different epochs.

To some extent this is borne out by Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen's sociological study into how American people view the past. When asked to name either a historic figure or someone from their personal past who had affected them, fifty-two per cent named a family member, whereas thirty-six per cent named a public or historic figure. When asked which kind of past was most important, sixty-six per cent said "family", compared with the "United States" (twenty-two per cent), "ethnic/racial group" (eight per cent) and "community" (four per cent).³¹¹ Yet while it can generally be assumed that family pasts, certainly within American culture, are important, the way in which family history is articulated and the meaning of family itself differs from culture to culture.³¹² There is evidence that patterns of autobiographical remembering and notions of selfhood are culturally learnt and passed on from early childhood. In Qi Wang and Jens Brockmeier's narrative content study, they found that American children are more likely to feature as independent protagonists in their autobiographical reminiscences and generally tend to be "voluminous, specific, self-focused and concerned with autonomy and personal predilections", whereas East Asian children tend to remember events as "routine-related, centred on relationships and sensitive to other people involved."³¹³ Personal heritage is perhaps more aligned to Western cultural practices in that it is focussed on one's own existence and overlaps with Western forms of autobiography. Instead of viewing an interest in personal heritage or family history as a natural and universal given, I interpret it as a socio-cultural practice that has its own history and generic development. In Chapter

³¹⁰ Ibid., p.xviii.

³¹¹ Roy Rosenzweig and David Paul Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 22.

³¹² Feng Zizhi, 'Genealogy in China', *Archivum*, 37 (1992), 193-99.

³¹³ Qi Wang and Jens Brockmeier, 'Autobiographical Remembering as Cultural Practice: Understanding the Interplay between Memory, Self and Culture', *Culture Psychology*, 8:1 (2002), 45-64, p. 48.

Two I will outline the ways in which it has developed within Britain, and in Chapter Three I will investigate genealogy as a form of autobiographical storytelling.

As well as the conflicting political and philosophical interests arising from the questions of what and who's history matters the most to whom, inherent to genealogical discourse and practice is a conflict over objects and interpretation, narrative and things. It is not only familiar places and persons who are close by that, arguably, have more existential significance, it is also things. A hierarchy of value, where tangible remains are placed above narrative, can be seen in Shakerly Mermion's seventeenth-century satire, *The Antiquary*, when the character Veterano insists that fragments, relics and ruins "are the Registers, the Chronicles of the age they were made in, and speak the truth of History, better than a hundred of your printed commentaries."³¹⁴ This emphasis on the 'raw', unmediated aspect of archival refuse, and on the object as something that can ordinarily be perceived and experienced through the senses, perhaps also supports the notion of the antiquarian endeavour as something that is more easily accessible and everyday.

This interest in the tangible can be seen in the rise of heritage, which began to be analysed by such theorists as Lowenthal in the 1970s. Arguing that the general perception of the past rested "more on existential than on historical understanding", Lowenthal cited antique buying, the marketing of keepsakes, desire for objects with a distressed look and aged patina, and visits to historic houses and archaeological sites, as expressions not only of nostalgia but also of historical imagination, as remedy for modern rootlessness, and even as psychological compensation for a lack of personal "family or childhood roots."³¹⁵ In this way, genealogical desire perhaps has fed into the need for tangible heritage. Within the realm of personal heritage and memory, there is integration between genealogical interest and tangible objects and places. This connection, while briefly noted by Lowenthal, has been further investigated by cultural geographers who, viewing family history as a subset of heritage, consider that it is closely related "to both the 'domestic realm' and personal identity, and is also saturated with geographical themes such as residential location, immigration, diasporas, ethnicity, maps, heritage tourism and homeland."³¹⁶ Instead of approaching personal heritage from the disciplinary standpoint of cultural geography, I investigate genealogy, family history or personal heritage primarily as an expression of a fundamental Western desire for autobiography and an 'authentic' sense of self. In

³¹⁴ Shakerly Mermion cited by Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz, *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), p. 1.

³¹⁵ Lowenthal, 'Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory', pp. 20-22.

³¹⁶ Timothy and Guelke, *Geography and genealogy: locating personal pasts*, p. 2.

particular, in the next two chapters I analyse the ways in which this desire interacts with British archivization, and how it has been played out within certain narratives.

From the standpoint of antiquarianism, however, a comparison can be drawn between aspects of genealogical research and the social practices of collecting. The connection between collecting and the late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century antiquarian interest in biography and genealogy is not completely favourable, as Stone wrote in 1971: “these obsessive collectors of biographical information belong to the same category of anal-erotic males as the collectors of butterflies, postage stamps, or cigarette cards; all are by-products of the Protestant Ethic.”³¹⁷ This view is shared by Erben who argues that the activity of collecting names and dates “produces pleasure in itself” and even goes on to suggest that Round may have had psychological difficulties.³¹⁸ However, a more nuanced critique is provided by Susan Pearce who has identified three main modes of collecting: the systematic, fetishistic and the souvenir modes. Pearce describes systematic collecting, where “an ostensibly intellectual rationale is followed, and the intention is to collect complete sets which will demonstrate understanding achieved.”³¹⁹ This intention to ‘collect’ a complete set of relatives can be seen in P.R. Jennings’ description of genealogy, which “has for us the same sort of attraction as a giant, never-ending crossword puzzle.”³²⁰ Similarly, in 1930, the American genealogist Donald Lines Jacobus described to his reader the satisfaction of filling up a blank ancestral chart:

If the genealogical bug once bites you, you are a doomed man, and never again will you be happy except when attempting to trace the elusive ancestor. It has all the fascination of a game for one who loves it. It is like working out a chess problem or a cross-word puzzle; but much more exhilarating, for the pawns in this game were once living human beings. You have ancestral charts in blank, which theoretically can be filled in completely with the names of your ancestors; and there is no elation akin to that which you experience when a long-sought forebear is discovered and an empty space on the chart becomes a name and an entity.³²¹

The second mode that Pearce identifies is “fetishistic collecting”, where “the objects are dominant and the collector responds to his obsessive need by gathering as many items as

³¹⁷ Stone, 'Prosopography', p. 49.

³¹⁸ Erben, 'Genealogy and Sociology: A Preliminary Set of Statements and Speculations', p. 279.

³¹⁹ Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 32.

³²⁰ 'Jennings', Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry., *Personally Speaking Again (about this ancestry business)* ([Sedgley]: Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry, 1981), p. 25.

³²¹ Donald Lines Jacobus, *Genealogy as Pastime and Profession*. 2nd edn (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1978), p. 41.

possible.” This mode, whereby objects are allowed “to create the self”, can perhaps be seen in genealogy when the aim is gather as many relatives as possible.³²² It can perhaps be best seen in surname studies. Gee writes that since “the family moved to Birmingham between 1821 and 1828 I have collected over 400 Gees and still have more to enter up on Index Cards.”³²³ It is this collecting aspect that arguably positions genealogy closer to hobbies such as bird-watching or train-spotting than to the intellectual vigour of analytical written history. Again amateur and professional interests appear to come into conflict. Colin Rogers and J. H. Smith express this conflict of interests when they write that amongst archivists and librarians is “the feeling that [genealogists’] research is too self-centred (the ‘train-spotting syndrome’); that only the researcher (or client) reaps the rewards, in contrast to the historian who aims to publish for the benefit of society’s understanding of its own past.”³²⁴ Generally, these systematic and fetishistic modes are more closely associated with the term, ‘genealogy’, than ‘family history’ or ‘personal heritage.’ Yet different modes overlap: Jacobus notes that part of the enjoyment of genealogy is the realization that “the pawns...were once living human beings” and that through research each name becomes an “entity.” These tensions between the amateur and the professional, between person and the record, between fact and fiction, and between the personal and national pasts are recurring fault-lines that run throughout genealogical discourse.

Whilst collecting names and dates can be likened to collecting objects, genealogical research and personal heritage includes interaction and interpretation of commemorative objects and heirlooms. Billington writes that:

My interest in Genealogy was originally sparked off by three family objects:

1. My fathers medal from the Boer War 1901;
2. A willow pattern jug engraved ‘Richard Billington 1828’;
3. An illustrated wrapper for (I quote) ‘Billington’s celebrated Gingerbread established by our ancestors in 1817’³²⁵

Pearce writes that “in souvenir collecting, the individual creates a romantic life-history by selecting and arranging personal memorial material to create what...might be called an object autobiography, where the objects are at the service of the autobiographer.”³²⁶

³²² Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*, p. 32.

³²³ Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry., *Personally Speaking about this Ancestry Business*, p. 55.

³²⁴ Colin D. Rogers and J. H. Smith, *Local Family History in England: 1538-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 2-3.

³²⁵ ‘Billington’, in Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry., *Personally Speaking about this Ancestry Business*, p. 77.

³²⁶ Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*, p. 32.

Billington's description does to some extent resonate with Pearce's model of souvenir collecting; however, the significant distinction is that Billington has not so much personally selected as inherited these objects. The items have not been collected and retained intentionally by the individual but by and for the family. In this way, while the objects do act as a catalyst for the creation of biographical narrative, the objects also carry a sense of obligation and have a social function in creating a collective autobiography of the Billingtons.

While in recent years collecting as a social practice has been analysed through the research of such people as Pearce, this has largely taken place within the field of museum studies. Like museums, British archives are connected to this antiquarian collecting tradition and, as will be outlined in Chapter Two, the development of local archives was specifically and partially connected to the activities of some antiquarians and genealogists. The story of the professionalization of history has overshadowed this strand within the narrative of the development of British archives. Beneath this historiography, however, lies an undercurrent of local antiquarianism and genealogical activity which was, and arguably still is, closely allied to the development and sustenance of archives. It is the genealogical element of this antiquarian undercurrent that the next chapter will expose.

In that chapter the focus will also be upon the history of genealogy in the Victorian and early twentieth century period. How we conceive of the family has changed and, consequently, these changes have shaped genealogy and genealogical practice. Gillis posits the growth in popular genealogical enquiry to the mid-nineteenth century when he argues that the mythic and imagined idea of families and homes to "live by" took root.³²⁷ He argues that it was at this point in history that middle-class Victorians turned the "family into an object of worshipful contemplation", creating a mythic notion of the idealized family, which has become essential for its meaning. Certainly, the canonical ideal of the Victorian family and home was forged during this period.³²⁸ Prior to the nineteenth century, the term 'family' was often used to mean all the members of a household, or all the members of a tribe or clan, whether they were related by blood or not. According to the 1851 Census of Great Britain, a family consisted of a head and dependent members, including servants, living within one household.³²⁹ Gillis argues that the notion of the

³²⁷ John R. Gillis, *A World of their own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 6-7, 74.

³²⁸ 'Family' Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society* ([London]: Fontana, 1976), pp. 108-11.

³²⁹ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes*. Rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. xxxviii-xxxix, 361.

idealized nuclear family, the idea of families “to live by” is still reflected in contemporary domestic recordkeeping practices. He writes:

Our desire to represent ourselves has turned our living rooms into family portrait galleries and our attics into archives. Our residences are mini-museums, filled with heirlooms, mementos, and souvenirs of family.³³⁰

One aim of Chapter Two is to trace certain elements of the genealogical imagination from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to provide a historical framework for the analyses of genealogical narratives in the third chapter.

In a similar vein to Gillis, Michel Foucault argues that during the nineteenth century the family as an institution changed. He writes:

The family is no longer to be just a system of relations inscribed in a social status, a kinship system, a mechanism for the transmission of property. It is to become a dense, saturated, permanent, continuous physical environment which envelops, maintains and develops the child's body. Hence it assumes a material figure defined within a narrower compass; it organises itself as the child's immediate environment, tending increasingly to become its basic framework for survival and growth. This leads to an effect of tightening, or at least intensification, of the elements and relations constituting the restricted family (the group of parents and children). It also leads to a certain inversion of axes: the conjugal bond no longer serves only, nor even primarily, to establish the junction of two lines of descent, but to organize the matrix of the new adult individual. No doubt it still serves to give rise to two lineages and hence produce a descent, but it serves also to produce – under the best possible conditions – a human being who will live to the state of adulthood. The new ‘conjuality’ lies rather in the link between parents and children. The family, seen as a narrow, localised pedagogical apparatus, consolidates itself within the interior of the great traditional family-as-alliance.³³¹

In this shift of attention onto the body of the child and childhood, the family became the “matrix of the new adult individual”, rather than “system of relations inscribed in a social status, a kinship system, a mechanism for the transmission of property”. It can be argued that within this shift – from the conjuality of joining two lines of descent to that of the link between parents and children – genealogy becomes less about the inheritance of property and more about the biographical developments of birth, childhood and development of the unique existent. This can be seen within the discourse of eugenics, where the notion of inheritance shifts in emphasis from property onto the physical body of

³³⁰ Gillis, *A World of their own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values*, p. xvi.

³³¹ Michel Foucault, 'The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century', in *Power-knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 166-82, pp. 172-73.

the child. This change that Foucault describes can also be seen as analogous to the shift from ‘genealogy’ to ‘personal heritage’ in that these terms represent a movement in emphasis from lineage, to an individual’s childhood development within the pedagogical nuclear family. By investigating the growth of genealogical discourse within the Victorian period in more detail, I will provide a more nuanced and analytical understanding of British genealogical development, which will, in turn, shed light on some of the issues to do with personal heritage and archivization outlined here.

I have demonstrated in this chapter that family history, while a “startling discovery” for professional academic historians, did not appear from nowhere.³³² At the point when history was being established as an academic discipline, genealogy was initially considered to be a branch of historical study and I have looked at why and how its reputation has changed. Family history has shared features with genealogy, antiquarianism and personal heritage, and was not a self-contained phenomenon but was and is related to and shaped by other developments, such as notions of inheritance, the development of other autobiographical and literary genres, the development of new technology and new recording practices. I have shown that genealogy was not simply about being elitist, but can also be interpreted as a tool in the formation of moral identifications, as an expression of romantic nostalgia, or an activity that not only re-enforced but also questioned social status. By exploring nineteenth-century genealogy in more depth, I will be able to expose a more complex picture of who was undertaking genealogy and what motivated them. What was the significance of genealogy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? How did the genre and practice of genealogy develop in this period? It is to these questions that we shall now turn.

³³² Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol 1, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, p. 19.

Chapter Two: Archivization of Genealogical Knowledge

The Circulation of Genealogical Knowledge

For the most part genealogy has been overlooked in British historiography and the history of archival provision. In 1901, Maitland wrote that

We cannot say that any organized academic opinion demanded the work that was done by the Record Commission, by the Rolls Series, or by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, or that the universities cried aloud for the publication of State papers and the opening of national archives. But some Neibuhr was translated and then some Ranke, and then it became plain that the sphere of history was expanding in all directions.³³³

Could it be that some of the voices crying out for the expansion of historical knowledge were genealogical? At the PRO on 20 April 1857, Ranke applied to inspect the “Domestic Papers of the 17th century” and on 15 June 1865, he sought out “Correspondence with German Courts.” However, alongside the “Copernicus of the study of history”³³⁴ can be found genealogists, such as Rev. H. W. Bellows who on 1 February 1856 carried out “Genealogical Searches relating to his own family” and R.N. Gregory and Mrs Gregory, who on 18 February 1865 applied in order to research the “History of the Gregory Family.”³³⁵ Whilst the German archival scholarship of Neibuhr and Ranke is often cited as the driver behind the development of the use of archives in the nineteenth century, the grassroots momentum of various individual genealogists, publishers, printing clubs and societies no doubt also had a vital role to play in the expansion and circulation of the past.

Yet the number of people undertaking genealogy in Britain during this period remains a mystery. Archival user statistics are scarce and, perhaps because of this, it has simply been presumed that genealogy was only pursued by an elite minority. However, there are some indications that genealogists did use archives and that this use was not motivated solely by aristocratic pride and monetary gain. In the mid-nineteenth century users of the PRO were categorized as either “business”, “legal” or “literary” readers. The categorization of genealogy as a literary pursuit rather than a business or legal one demonstrates that genealogical use of the public records was perceived to be an antiquarian pursuit. In the keeper’s annual report of 1853 the majority of these literary enquirers were described as

³³³ Frederick W. Maitland, *The Teaching of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), p. xvi.

³³⁴ Goldstein, 'The Professionalisation of History in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', p. 7.

³³⁵ The National Archives, Domestic Records of the Public Record Office, PRO 35/16.

concerned with “topographical researches: biography and genealogy constitute important heads.”³³⁶ In a list of approximately nine hundred and forty-three literary applications to the PRO between 1 January 1852 and 26 May 1866, seventeen per cent of applicants specifically cited genealogy or family history as the object of their inquiry. If applicants of related antiquarian pursuits such as local history, parish history, topography, biography and county history are included, the number of applicants rises to approximately thirty-two per cent of literary readers.³³⁷

This interest is corroborated by the quantity of genealogical titles published during this period (see Figure 2). The number of individual family histories rose dramatically in the 1880s to a level continued in the first decade of the twentieth century. This increase reflects a reduction in the costs of private printing (just under one third of titles were privately printed), and marks a response to the publication efforts of antiquarian societies and work of the Historic Manuscripts Commission (HMC), who had started to publish their reports from 1870s onwards.³³⁸ Genealogical demand was also fuelled by the commemorations that accompanied the turn of the century, the development of familial commemoration and perhaps a general *fin de siècle* feeling of the end of an age marked by the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. The drop in publications in the early twentieth century can perhaps be accounted for by the adverse influence of the First World War.

³³⁶ 'The fourteenth report of the deputy keeper of the public records', in *Command Papers; Reports of Commissioners* (HMSO, 1953), p. 25, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:rec:1852-029152> [accessed 10 April 2007].

³³⁷ TNA, Domestic Records of the Public Record Office, PRO 35/1.

³³⁸ This represents 555 out of 1778 titles, or thirty-one per cent.

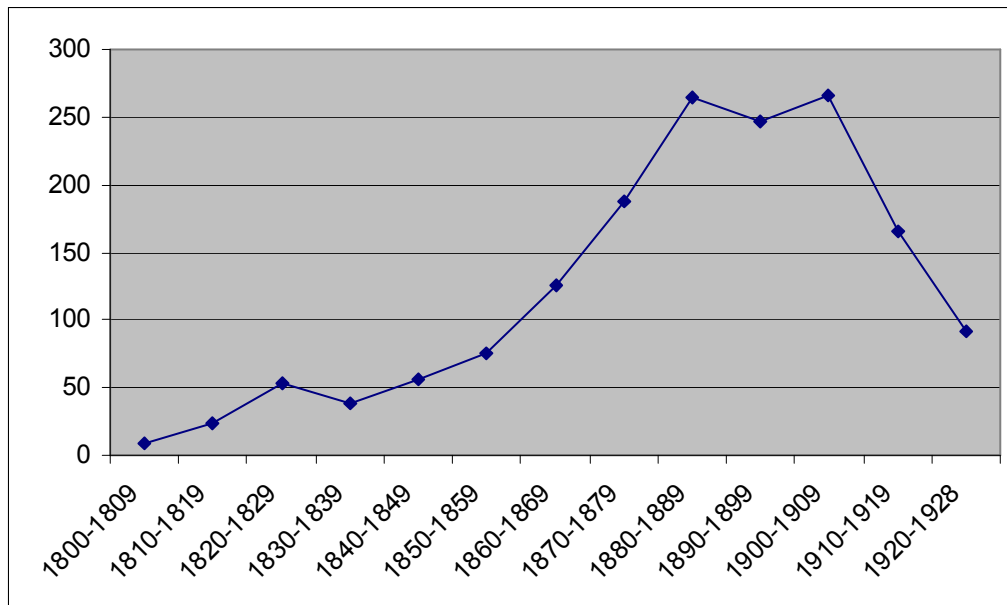


Figure 2

Number of genealogical titles published between 1800 and 1928³³⁹

It can generally be assumed that at least half of the titles were written by antiquarians who were researching the history of their own family.³⁴⁰ But who were these authors? While some were heralds, peerage lawyers, or members of the aristocracy, a significant proportion was not. The majority of nineteenth-century antiquarians were from the professional middle classes and were often graduates. It is likely that many had been introduced to antiquarian studies at university and then continued their interests after they had taken holy orders. Woolf writes that during the eighteenth century what “amounts to a substantial re-clericalization of historical writing” took place as clerics took over from the gentry in writing about antiquities, genealogy and ecclesiastical history.³⁴¹ Sweet notes that the most significant and active antiquarians were likely to be clergymen; during the eighteenth century they represented between ten and fifteen per cent of the members of the Society of Antiquaries.³⁴² From the above survey, approximately nine per cent were written

³³⁹ Information taken from T. R. Thomson, *A Catalogue of British Family Histories* (London: John Murray, 1928).

³⁴⁰ In his catalogue Thomson did not include biographies, printed pedigree sheets, reprints from genealogical magazines or works produced in the USA, even if they concerned British families. Of 1778 titles recorded as being published between 1600 and 1928, 217 were of unknown authorship. Of the titles where the author matched the subject of the publication, there were 726 titles. This represents 46.5 per cent of titles with known authorship. This figure however, does not take into account relations who have a different surname to the branch of the family they are studying; for example, this would particularly apply to women who changed their surname upon marriage. However, it can generally be assumed that at least half of the titles were written by people who were researching the history of their own family. The figures also do not take into account the number of titles written by one author.

³⁴¹ Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, p. 120.

³⁴² Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, p. 49.

by clergy.³⁴³ Genealogy was an activity that would have enabled this professional class to keep up their local and ecclesiastical interests by drawing upon the parochial registers, records and funerary monuments of the church and by documenting local family histories – including their own.

As described in the previous chapter, access to and interpretation of archival documents was an important feature of early-modern antiquarian endeavour. In his *Antiquities*, Dugdale acknowledges Sir Simon Archer (1581-1662), “a diligent Gatherer and preserver of very many choice Manuscripts.”³⁴⁴ Similarly, Dugdale dedicates his work to Christopher Lord Hatton (bap.1605-1670), formerly Comptroller of the Household and a member of Charles I’s privy council, who not only gave him access to his “choice and costly Treasurie” but also “accesse to most of the publique Records in this Nation.”³⁴⁵ Dugdale based his 1655 work, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, upon the extensive manuscript collections developed by Glover, who was the first to have made antiquarian extracts from monastic cartularies.³⁴⁶ This circulation of knowledge amongst like-minded peers and through print culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not only contributed to the development of empirical scientific knowledge, but also for the most part “revolved around what was essentially genealogical material.”³⁴⁷ Can this relationship between genealogy and the development of archival provision be seen in the nineteenth century? Through which channels was genealogical knowledge circulated during this period?

Dugdale’s reliance upon archives was certainly important to later antiquarians and genealogists. In 1922 Round wrote that

Record evidence does not change: the *renvois* of Dugdale still provide a priceless key to the Public Records, while the muniments in private hands which he was enabled to inspect, and which in many cases he so patiently transcribed, are ... no longer accessible to ourselves.³⁴⁸

This view was echoed nearly a century earlier by John Bowyer Nichols (1779-1863) when he was called to give evidence before the Select Committee on Management and Affairs of

³⁴³ This accounts for 153 out of 1778 titles.

³⁴⁴ Dugdale, *The antiquities of Warwickshire illustrated from records, leiger-books, manuscripts, charters, evidences, tombes, and armes: beautified with maps, prospects and portraictures* p. 4, in *Early English Books Online*.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., p.5.

³⁴⁶ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 365.

³⁴⁷ Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, pp. xiv, 39.

³⁴⁸ Round, 'The Legend of 'Eudo Dapifer'', p. 1.

Record Commission in 1836. In response to a question about the accessibility of records, Nichols answered:

I think that historians had formerly easy access to the Record Offices. The 'History of Warwickshire,' by Sir W. Dugdale, and the 'History of Northamptonshire,' by Thoroton, seem founded on the public records.³⁴⁹

He went on to state that despite some improvements in county histories in the twenty years prior to 1836 he still considered that since the time of Dugdale and Thoroton,

... there is, in my opinion, a manifest falling off in that respect in the county histories published in the last century. They do not appear to be formed on the same sure basis. I conceive this arose from the public offices being closed to the easy access of historians, and also from the expense of fees and office copies.³⁵⁰

While the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed the birth of genealogical and antiquarian studies based upon a relatively increased physical and intellectual access to archival documentation, in the eighteenth century this was perhaps the exception rather than the rule, as the expansion of genealogical research was hampered by the cost of publication, lack of social co-operation and the inaccessibility of archives. This section examines how these difficulties were overcome from the particular view point of the antiquarian genealogist.

Throughout the eighteenth century, genealogical, biographical and antiquarian interests were enabled by the expansion of print culture. The family printing firm that John Nichols (1745-1826) founded in London specialized in antiquarian publications, so much so that in 1836 Nichols' son, John Bowyer Nichols (1779-1863) boasted that "from the presses of my father and myself have proceeded most of the county histories that have been published during [the last forty years.]"³⁵¹ The business also published the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a renowned source of biography that has been used as a reference over seven thousand times for the current *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.³⁵² Similarly, the eighteenth century witnessed the foundation of many antiquarian and learned societies, including the

³⁴⁹ J.B. Nichols, 'Evidence before the Select Committee on Management and Affairs of the Record Commission', *Select Committee on Management and Affairs of Record Commission* (1836), pp. 429,565, *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online:ProQuest*, <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:rec:1836-016289> [accessed 7 April 2008].

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Julian Pooley and Robin Myers, 'Nichols family (1760-1939)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63494>> [accessed 17 September 2007].

establishment of associations such as the Society of Antiquaries in 1707 and the Spalding Gentleman's Society in 1712. Yet it was not until the early decades of the nineteenth century that men clubbed together through such societies as the Roxburghe Club (1812), in order to reprint manuscripts and earlier literary works.³⁵³ In this way, editions by Dugdale and his contemporaries reached a wider audience through the endeavour of scholarly publishers and antiquarian printing clubs. In 1830, for example, the antiquarians, John Caley (*bap.* 1760-1834), Henry Ellis (1777-1869) and Bulkeley Bandinel (1781-1861) completed the lavish re-publication of Dugdale's *Monasticon*, which was originally published in 1655.

A major source of genealogical information was the sixteenth and seventeenth-century heraldic visitations. By the end of the nineteenth century, over half of the visitations from 1530 to 1687 had been published, many under the auspices of societies. The Surtees Society was founded in 1834 to the memory of the antiquarian county historian, Robert Surtees (1779–1834), author of *The History and the Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* (1816-40).³⁵⁴ Included in the genealogical material published by the society, was Dugdale's *The Visitation of the County of Yorke* edited by George Andrews in 1859, and the 1530 visitations of Cumberland, Nottinghamshire and Northumberland edited by W. H. D. Longstaffe and published in 1863. In 1872, Rev. F. R. Raines edited Dugdale's visitation of 1664-5 in Lancaster. This work, along with other visitations for Lancaster, was published by the Chetham Society. Founded in 1843, the society was named in honour of the early-modern antiquarian, Humphrey Chetham (1580-1653) in order to publish "Remains Historical and Literary connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancashire and Chester."³⁵⁵

With the motto, "the Glory of Children are Their Fathers", the Harleian Society was formed in 1869 by a "meeting of a few friends to consider the best method of presenting to the public in permanent form, the numerous manuscripts relating to the history of our ancestors."³⁵⁶ It was named after the collection of Harleian manuscripts granted to the British Museum in 1753, built up by Robert and Edward Harley, Earls of Oxford, which

³⁵³ The Roxburghe Club was founded following the sale of the Duke of Roxburghe's library in the summer of 1812 by the bibliophile, Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1776-1847).

³⁵⁴ Robert Surtees and others, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, compiled from original Records* (London: J.B. Nichols and others, 1816-40).

³⁵⁵ The Chetham Society, 'History', *The Chetham Society Website* (2008), <http://www.chethams.org.uk/Chetham_Society.htm> [accessed 24 January 2008].

³⁵⁶ Harleian Society, 'Articles of Association and List of Members', in *The Visitation of London in the Year 1568*, ed. by Joseph Jackson Howard and George J. Armytage (London: Harleian Society, 1869), p. 3.

contained many copies of visitations. Between 1869 and 1938 the society published thirty-one volumes of visitations from different repositories, alongside parish registers and other genealogical documents. In this way, the society met its “sole object”, which was “to perpetuate and render readily accessible important manuscripts relating mainly to personal and family history of the nation, most of which are unique and cannot now be consulted without more or less trouble or expense, and all of which are daily and hourly subject to the chance of irretrievable destruction.”³⁵⁷

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, earlier genealogical material was not only circulated amongst antiquarian societies, but also to an increasingly literate public through the newly-established free local public libraries which were often subscribers to such works. Whilst membership levels of the Harleian Society remained relatively constant during the 1880s and 90s, the proportion of library members increased. The first public library to join the society was the Liverpool Free Public Library in 1872, which was closely followed by Manchester Free Library in 1874. The greatest increase in library subscriptions was in 1894 when nineteen free public libraries joined the society’s lists. In this way, archival material such as the sixteenth and seventeenth century visitations and parish registers was increasingly made accessible to a wider public.³⁵⁸

During the nineteenth century, antiquarians and genealogists formed “epistemological communities” as they founded societies, corresponded, published and shared copies of archival material and pedigrees, and wrote criticism.³⁵⁹ In addition to the *Gentleman’s*

³⁵⁷ 'Preface', St. Dionis Backchurch (London England) and Harleian Society., *The reiester booke of Saynte De'nis, Backchurch parishe (City of London) for maryages, christenyges, and buryalles, begynnyng in the yeare of O[u]r Lord God 1538*. ed. by Joseph Lemuel Chester, *The publications of the Harleian Society Registers* (London: [Harleian Society], 1878), p. vi.

³⁵⁸ Harleian Society., 'Annual Report for 1870-71, Rules and List of Members', in *The Visitations of the County of Oxford*, ed. by William Harvey, et al. (London: [Harleian Society], 1871); Harleian Society., 'Annual Report 1879-1880, Rules and List of Members', in *The Visitation of London, Anno Domini 1633, 1634, and 1635*, ed. by Henry St. George, et al. (London: [Harleian Society], 1880); Harleian Society., 'Report for year ending 1889, Rules and List of Members', in *Allegations for marriage licences issued by the Vicar-General of the Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. by George J. Armytage (London: [Harleian Society], 1890); Harleian Society., 'Report for year ending 1894, Rules and List of Members', in *Familiae Minorum Gentium*, ed. by Joseph Hunter and John William Clay (London: [Harleian Society], 1895).

³⁵⁹ Peter Burke defines an epistemological community as “the fundamental units which construct knowledge and direct its diffusion through certain channels.” Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p. 8. A more precise notion is that of the discourse community provided by John M. Swales, who has set out several criteria for its definition: firstly, it should share “a broadly agreed set of common public goals”; secondly, there should be “mechanisms of intercommunication among its members”; thirdly, it “uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback”; fourthly, it “utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims”; fifthly, in “addition to owning genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis” and lastly, a “discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discorsal expertise.” Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*, pp. 24-27.

Magazine, many snippets of genealogical information were solicited for and printed in *Notes and Queries: A Medium of Inter-Communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists etc*, published from 1849 onwards. These journals, and the clubs and social networks that produced them, acted as a form of public intercommunication which was vital for the expansion and development of genealogical knowledge. Like current online message boards, they offered a level of anonymous collaboration – the *Gentleman's Magazine's* first editor, John Nichols, for example, used to query contributors in the footnotes under various pseudonyms in order to anonymously solicit and channel information.³⁶⁰

In 1832 genealogical discourse found a more specific channel of public communication from an offshoot of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In 1832 John Gough Nichols (1806-73), the grandson of John Nichols, wrote that “if the [Gentleman's] Magazine were relieved of some of its topographical matter, there would be more room for interesting documents and letters of historical character.”³⁶¹ The prospectus for the *Collectanea Topographica* was announced in August 1832.³⁶² While there is no mention of genealogical material in the title at this point, it was intended to include the:

... publication of important inedited documents illustrative of local History and Genealogy, and the preservation of notices or fragments of a topographical nature, too brief to appear in a separate form, but which may form the material of future County Histories.³⁶³

Entitled, *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica*, this journal was published in London in 1834 and was initially edited by Sir Frederic Madden (1801-1873), then Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum. Madden was assisted by J. G. Nichols, and the antiquarian “vello-maniac”, Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792–1872).³⁶⁴ Nichols was a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and, while Madden and Phillipps were not fellows at this point, they circulated in the same antiquarian sphere – indeed, both were vice-presidents of the Surtees Society. Just like the provision of original digitised archival material online today, these *Collectanea* acted as a form of printed access to the collection of original, “inedited” documents, record extracts and old pedigrees. And just as it can be argued today

³⁶⁰ Pooley and Myers, 'Nichols family (1760-1939)'.

³⁶¹ British Library, Correspondence of Sir Frederic Madden, Add. Eg. 2839 fol.85.

³⁶² BL, Correspondence of Sir Frederic Madden, Add. Eg. 2839 fol.141.

³⁶³ 'Literary and Scientific Intelligence: New Works announced for Publication', *The Gentleman's Magazine* July/August 1832, p. 60.

³⁶⁴ Alan Bell, 'Phillipps, Sir Thomas, baronet (1792-1872)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22143>> [accessed 19 January 2008].

that digitized access is driven by and biased towards social certain groups, so too was this material since the editors were concerned to include information that related to the specific counties in which their subscribers had an interest.³⁶⁵

As the nineteenth century progressed, so did the market for genealogical journals. From 1846 to 1858 *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica*, lost its Latin nomenclature and was published under the title *Topographer and Genealogist*. In 1863 Nichols edited the newly founded *Herald & Genealogist*, which broke new ground by including book reviews, essays on heraldic and genealogical topics and critical discussions. From 1866 to 1937 the *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* was published. Its founding editor was Joseph Jackson Howard, a civil servant who devoted his spare time to genealogy. The *Miscellanea* mainly focussed on publishing 'raw' genealogical material, such as ancient pedigrees and record extracts and, unlike the *Herald & Genealogist*, contained little criticism. In 1887 Howard was appointed Maltravers Herald Extraordinary and in 1893 he collaborated with the antiquarian genealogist, Frederick Arthur Crisp (1851-1922) in the publication of twenty volumes of compiled modern pedigrees under the title of *A Visitation of England and Wales*.³⁶⁶ In 1877, the freemason and antiquarian, George William Marshall (1839-1905) founded and edited for the first seven years, *The Genealogist: a quarterly magazine of genealogical, antiquarian, topographical and heraldic research*.³⁶⁷ Marshall also published an index to published pedigrees called *The Genealogist's Guide*, which successfully ran to four editions from 1879 to 1903.³⁶⁸

No doubt some of the interest in genealogy was combined with an attraction to the romance of heraldry and the medieval world. The publisher and antiquarian Elliot Stock (1837-1911) had a reputation for attractive publications. He had reissued the Pre-Raphaelite's magazine *The Germ* and specialized in the reproduction of early editions.³⁶⁹ His interest in a medieval aesthetic can be seen in the production of *The Genealogical Magazine*, (published from May 1897 to 1904), which included full facsimiles of documents, and, in imitation of illuminated manuscripts, illustrated capital letters and printed decorated headers. It was lavishly bound in embossed leather with gothic script on

³⁶⁵ BL, Correspondence of Sir Frederick Madden, Add. Eg. 2839 f. 249.

³⁶⁶ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 396.

³⁶⁷ George W. Marshall, 'Preface', *The Genealogist*, (1877).

³⁶⁸ This work continued to be valued in the twentieth century. Between 1947 and 1952 it was extended with a four-volume supplement edited by J. B. Whitmore of the Harleian Society and was published with a further supplement by G. B. Barrow in 1977. Wagner, *English Genealogy*, pp. 344-49.

³⁶⁹ Sybille Pantazzi, 'Elliot Stock', *The Book Collector*, 20 (1971), 25-46.

scrolls of parchment, with an emblem made up of the English oak tree, Tudor rose and a chained dragon, the spine featuring an armoured helmet.

While these grassroots developments stimulated antiquarian interest, archival access was officially promoted at the national level through the foundation of the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1869. The purpose of the Royal Warrant was to make information available for the sake of “general public interest.”³⁷⁰ Consequently, it might be argued that genealogical material was to be excluded. After all, owners were given “full assurance that no information is sought except such as relates to Public Affairs.” As such, anything of a private nature or relating to title would not be included.³⁷¹ Nevertheless, genealogy was considered to come under the rubric of “General Literature.” Genealogical and heraldic collections were listed in the first report and included such items as the papers of Sir Peter Leycester, described as “an indefatigable collector of evidences for the history of Chester and of his own family”; a volume dated 1620 about the history of the family of Constable in the Everingham Park collection; Robert Gordon of Straloch’s family history; a “Careful family history, prepared by Mr Maule” dated 1732; and the genealogical manuscripts relating to Scotch families belonging to the peerage lawyer, John Riddell. In addition, the genealogical value of one collection belonging to the Corporation of Glasgow is noted by John Stuart, who describes a series “of records of Sasines and Notarial Writs of a miscellaneous character, beginning in 1555, relating generally to the business of the citizens, and useful for incidental illustrations of genealogy.”³⁷² In this way, some archival information about potential genealogical sources became available.³⁷³

One reason why Victorian genealogy has been overlooked has perhaps been because the nationally recognized Society of Genealogists was not established until 1911. Yet a Genealogical and Historical Society of Great Britain was founded as early as the 1850s by

³⁷⁰ Historic Manuscripts Commission., *First Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London: HMSO, 1870) p. iii, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:rec:1870-046171> [accessed 28 January 2008].

³⁷¹ Roger H. Ellis, 'The Historical Manuscripts Commission 1869-1969', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 2 (1960-1964), 233-42, p. 233.

³⁷² Historic Manuscripts Commission., *First Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* pp. 45,46, 115-26, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online*.

³⁷³ Families, while they are in some cases seen as the defining feature of the development of a fonds are not the main descriptive or organizing feature. In the Access to Archives database, 9,563 out of 100,989 EAD catalogue files are tagged by the family name element, which is 9.5 per cent of entries. This compares to 30,784 out of 100,989 EAD catalogue files, or 30.5 per cent for personal name elements and 83,705 out of 100,989 EAD catalogue files, or 82.9 per cent for organization name elements. Some entries are tagged under two or more elements. Email to author from Matthew Hillyard, A2A, The National Archives, Kew, 19 September 2008.

Rycroft Reeve “for the elucidation and compilation of Family History, Lineage, and Biography, and for authenticating and illustrating the same.”³⁷⁴ In 1855 they reported that they had elected forty-eight fellows and sixteen members and that they had received “upwards of two hundred letters [...] from Noblemen, Baronets, Clergymen, and Literary men of acknowledged judgement in commendation of the Society.”³⁷⁵ Included was the peerage lawyer Grimaldi, who was offered an honorary fellowship in 1855.³⁷⁶ The society started with an ambitious programme of concentrating on pedigrees from the time of the Norman Conquest and the three centuries preceding it. A Committee of Research aided members and fellows in their researches, and investigations were carried out into manorial rights and customs. In addition, they planned to commence a series of genealogical and historical records from the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy and to continue it in seven great divisions, to develop a copied archive of antiquarian and genealogical notes, and to publish a journal and a work of literary lore based on biographical and historical facts.³⁷⁷

Yet, despite this optimism – and probably due to its overly ambitious range of activities – by the latter part of the nineteenth-century the Society’s whereabouts and endeavours had become questionable. In 1887, the former Chairman of the society, E. Walford, witheringly replied to a query placed by George Frederick Tudor Sherwood (1867- ?)³⁷⁸ in *Notes and Queries* admitting:

... that [the society] did very little work after the first year or two of its existence, that its ‘local habitation’ has been unknown to me and undiscoverable by me for the last few years, and that I have not withdrawn my name from it only in a vague hope that it will wake up again some day, like a second Rip van Winkle, into a vigorous and useful existence.³⁷⁹

Despite its failure, the society demonstrated an interest in national ancestry and the genealogy of the British Empire. It justified its transcription of Gaelic, Danish and Saxon documents on the grounds that they related:

³⁷⁴ Richard Sims, *A Manual for the Genealogist, Topographer, Antiquary, and Legal Professor* (London: J. Russell Smith, 1856), p. 457.

³⁷⁵ BL, Correspondence of Stacey Grimaldi, Add. 34189 fol. 436.

³⁷⁶ BL, Correspondence of Stacey Grimaldi, Add. 34189 fol. 429.

³⁷⁷ BL, Correspondence of Stacey Grimaldi, Add. 34189 fol. 436.

³⁷⁸ It is significant that Sherwood queried the existence of a genealogical society as he went on to found the Society of Genealogists with Charles Allan Bernau nearly two decades later.

³⁷⁹ E. Walford, 'Genealogical and Historical Society of Great Britain', *Notes and Queries* 17 September 1887, p. 234.

... to periods the most eventful which this country ever witnessed, when sea and land were daily scenes of conflict between races, tribes and families, and pursuing the struggles of national and internecine strife, till forms of warfare, modes of government, and popular habits assumed the characteristics of more enlightened and civilized times.³⁸⁰

Furthermore, the society's very existence and programme provides evidence of an attitude that linked history with genealogy, where history was viewed as "genealogy in the concrete."³⁸¹

Throughout the nineteenth century some of the most vocal campaigners for archival legislation were genealogists. Before the establishment of civil registration, the system of parochial registration was patchy and unreliable, despite being overseen by regular Archdeaconry visitations. Grimaldi gave evidence before the Select Committee on Parochial Registration in 1833, which had been formed in the wake of the constitutional reforms of 1832 and had led to the Registration and Marriage Acts of 1836. No doubt his motivations for supporting civil registration were driven by the legal need for accurate pedigrees in order to prove succession to property.³⁸² In 1837 he had drafted an unsuccessful bill to improve conditions for users of public records with the antiquary and then employee of the Record Commission, William Henry Black (1808-1872), who later became assistant keeper to the newly formed PRO. In 1857 Thomas Mann from the General Register Office wrote to Grimaldi, forwarding a bill proposing a national index to a proportion of parish registers and to ask his advice on the utility of the proposed scheme.³⁸³

More significantly, the drive towards better improvement in the care of local records was furthered by the genealogist, William P.W. Phillimore (1853-1913). In 1890 he founded the British Records Society and over his career he edited more than two hundred volumes of parish registers, inquisitions and will calendars. Trained in law at Queen's College Oxford, he tirelessly campaigned for the preservation of provincial records and advocated for legislation for the establishment of county record offices.³⁸⁴ Following the

³⁸⁰ BL, Correspondence of Stacey Grimaldi, Add. 34189 fol. 436.

³⁸¹ BL, Correspondence of Stacey Grimaldi, Add. 34189 fol. 538.

³⁸² Edward Higgs, *Life, Death and Statistics: Civil Registration, Censuses and the Work of the General Register Office, 1836-1952* (Hatfield: Local Population Studies, 2004), pp. 3-18.

³⁸³ Unfortunately, while Thomas Mann refers to Grimaldi's unsuccessful bill drafted with William Black, I have not been able to find any further evidence for it. BL, Correspondence of Stacey Grimaldi, Add. 34189 fol.444.

³⁸⁴ Phillimore received a Bachelor of Law in 1880. William P.W. Phillimore, 'Letter to the Editor: Provincial Records', *The Times*, 10 October 1888, p. 4; William P.W. Phillimore, 'Letter to the Editor: Parish

administrative changes of the Local Government Act, 1888, Phillimore drafted “An Act for the Preservation of Public and Private Records” (1889) which proposed the formation of fireproof County Record Offices. He envisioned that this arrangement would supersede the HMC, and that the record offices would be overseen by a Central Record Board of archival experts. These in turn would be overseen by the Master of Rolls who would also make the ultimate decision over what constituted a local record and which local records would be selected for permanent preservation. On 14 January 1890 the draft bill was sent via Benjamin G. Lake of Lincoln’s Inn to the then current Master of the Rolls, William Baliol Brett, Baron Esher (1815-1899), but it was met with a very cold reception and Phillimore’s bill consequently floundered.³⁸⁵

Despite this setback, Phillimore nevertheless seized the opportunity to press for local archival legislation when in 1897 he uncovered the “Great Shipway Pedigree Fraud.”³⁸⁶ Colonel Robert Shipway had paid £700 to former schoolmaster, Herbert Davies to trace his Gloucestershire ancestry. Unbeknownst to Shipway, Davies was a “born forger” and “expert in the manufacture and garbling of documents.”³⁸⁷ He stole wills from the probate registry, replacing them with forgeries and altered several entries in parish registers. He even obtained permission from the Home Office to open two graves, upon which he then placed the name and crest of a fictitious John Shipway. By chance, Phillimore uncovered Davies’ fraud and handed the details to Sir Francis Jeune, President of the Probate Division. For his crimes Davies was eventually sentenced to three years’ penal servitude.³⁸⁸

The case was widely publicised in *The Times* from September to November 1898 and brought to the public’s attention the state of local records.³⁸⁹ In the wake of such interest, Phillimore presented a second version of his bill to the Incorporated Law Society. He

Registers', *The Times*, 30 January 1894, p. 14; William P.W. Phillimore, 'Letter to the Editor: Parish Registers: Practical Suggestions', *The Times*, 2 October 1912, p. 7.

³⁸⁵ TNA, Records of the Supreme Court of Judicature and related courts, J113, p.61.

³⁸⁶ William P.W. Phillimore, *The "Principal genealogical specialist"; or Regina v. Davies and the shipway genealogy, being the story of a remarkable pedigree fraud* (London: Phillimore, 1899).

³⁸⁷ 'The sentence passed on Davies [Editorial]', *The Times*, 25 November 1898, p. 7.

³⁸⁸ Phillimore & Co., *Phillimore: 100 Years of Service to Local & Family History 1897-1997* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1997).

³⁸⁹ 'Extraordinary Charge Of Fraud', *The Times*, 24 September 1898, p. 11; 'The Extraordinary Charge Of Fraud', *The Times*, 30 September 1898, p. 2; 'Colonel Shipway's Pedigree', *The Times*, 7 October 1898, p. 2; 'Colonel Shipway's Pedigree', *The Times*, 14 October 1898, p. 12; J. C. Harris, 'British Marriages Abroad: Letters to the Editor', *The Times*, 18 November 1898, p. 15; William P.W. Phillimore, 'The Shipway Case: Letters to the Editor', *The Times*, 24 November 1898, p. 6; First Class assistant in the manuscript department of the British Museum., 'The Shipway Case: Letters to the Editor', *The Times*, 28 November 1898, p. 10; 'British Record Society, Ltd', *The Times*, 5 May 1899, p. 7; Ralph Nevill, 'The Custody Of Local Records: Letters to the Editor', *The Times*, 11 August 1899, p. 4.

argued that a system of district record offices should be set up based on the essential principles of safe custody, concentration at suitable centres, accessibility for users and that there should be separate custodians for obsolete historical records – “in other words, Record makers should not be Record keepers”.³⁹⁰ In response, the Incorporated Law Society, under the presidency of Lake, resolved that “the time has arrived for taking steps to ensure the safer custody and preservation of local records, and that to effect this object it is desirable that county record offices should be established as depositories for local records.” Accordingly, the Society appointed a committee to “ascertain how such a scheme could best be carried out.”³⁹¹

At the same time, the Congress of Archaeological Societies appointed a deputation headed by the Seventh Duke of Northumberland, Eustace Percy (1887-1958) and the Bishop of London, Dr. Mandell Creighton (1843-1901), himself a historian, to urge the government to improve local records provision. Creighton succeeded in having a question put to parliament on local records in the spring of 1899. This led to the appointment in November by the Prime Minister, the First Lord of the Treasury, Arthur J. Balfour, of “a Departmental Committee, to investigate in a general manner the state and condition of local records throughout the country, and to advise what steps ought to be taken for their better preservation.”³⁹² Even though Creighton privately admitted that “local archives are hardly my business”, he acknowledged that since he had pushed for action, he would have to see it through and accordingly, was appointed as chairman of the Committee.³⁹³ He was assisted by what is probably the most influential committee ever to address records provision in the UK: Sir Francis Mowatt (1837-1919), Permanent Secretary of the Treasury; Sir Henry Churchill Maxwell Lyte (1848-1940), Deputy Keeper of the Records; Sir Courtenay P. Ilbert (1841-1924), Parliamentary Council to the Treasury and later Clerk to the House of Commons; and S.E. Spring Rice, Principal Clerk in the Treasury. Known as the Local Records Committee, this group gleaned evidence from county councils, municipal corporations, learned and antiquarian societies, and ecclesiastical authorities on the state of local records provision not only in England and Wales but also in Scotland and Ireland. A wide section of stakeholders made their views known to the Committee,

³⁹⁰ William P.W. Phillimore, 'Our Local Records: A Policy', *Law Magazine & Review*, (1905-6), 281-89, p. 284.

³⁹¹ 'Literary Gossip', *The Athenaeum*, 16 March 1889, p. 347; 'Provinc[i]al Records', *Daily News*, 14 March 1889; 'The Incorporated Law Society', *Daily News* 9 October 1890.

³⁹² William P.W. Phillimore, 'Letters to the Editor: Diocesan Records Bill', *The Times*, 25 July 1900, p. 15; Phillimore, 'Our Local Records: A Policy', p. 281.

³⁹³ Letter from Mandell Creighton to Balzani, July 10 1900 in Louise Creighton, *Life and letters of Mandell Creighton, D.D., Oxon and Cam.: sometime Bishop of London*. 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904), p. 436.

including many antiquarians and genealogists who either responded personally, or through their representative body, such as the British Record Society, the Harleian Society, the Thorosby Society and the Shropshire Parish Register Society.

In 1901 Creighton died suddenly, and the historian and MP, James Bryce (1838-1922) took over as chairman. In 1902 a comprehensive report, based on a draft by Creighton, was published. It recommended the formation of dry, fireproof, local record offices under the charge of salaried and – where possible – trained archivists. It argued that universities should be directed towards providing archival training along the lines of the *École des Chartes*, and advocated “uniformity in the system of classifying, arranging, indexing and calendaring.”³⁹⁴ It also recommended that inspectors of local record offices be appointed by the PRO to report on and advise local record offices and oversee the destruction of records.³⁹⁵

In terms of legislation, the committee did not regard Phillimore’s draft bills “as suitable for our purpose. The provisions of the first draft are too numerous, complicated, and stringent.” The second, while “less complex and less contentious”, was nevertheless dismissed because, “the object in view would be attained by a measure of an even simpler character.”³⁹⁶ Instead the report called for the extension and strengthening of existing legislation. A year after the publication of the Committee’s report, a proposed bill was presented by Mr Bull to the House of Common 19 March 1903 to extend Section 17 (9) of the Local Government Act, 1894. Less strongly worded and much shorter than Phillimore’s draft bill of 1899, it nevertheless followed Phillimore’s vision by giving county councils the power to remove public county, borough and parish records to safe custody, thereby forming local record offices.³⁹⁷

Whilst county councils had permission to form local archives, there was little incentive for them to do so, especially when faced with the pressures of the First World War. In addition, there was a lack of coherence over whether or not local records could include

³⁹⁴ James 1st Viscount Bryce, 'Report of the Committee appointed to inquire as to the existing arrangements for the collection and custody of Local Records, and as to further measures which it may be advisable to take for that purpose', in *Records Local: Report of Committee* (HMSO, 1902), p. 48, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpr&rft_dat=xri:hcpr:fulltext:1902-002406> [accessed 12 June 2008].

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.49.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.46-47.

³⁹⁷ Bill for the Preservation of Public and Private Local Records (*Records Local: Local Records Preservation*), 1903, (108) 3.EDW.7., in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online:ProQuest*, <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpr&rft_dat=xri:hcpr:fulltext:1903-002685> [accessed 20 April 2008].

parish registers and diocesan records. Nevertheless, antiquarians still worked to bring the care and preservation of local and private archives – especially parish registers – to the attention of the general public. In his publication, *The Huntingdon Peerage*, Bell described visiting the parish clerk of Christ Church who recounted that some of the early parish registers had been destroyed by the late curate's wife “who made *kettle-holders* of them.”³⁹⁸ (his emphasis). In a similar fashion, Emma Elizabeth Thoyts (1860-1949), the paleographer, genealogist and author of *How to decipher and study Old Documents* (1893), brought public attention to the subject of access to diocesan transcripts, arguing that the system of application to individual clergymen was highly inefficient.³⁹⁹

Genealogists not only campaigned for better care of local records but they also produced guides to archives, thereby pioneering the development of “archival intelligence” among the wider population.⁴⁰⁰ Richard Sims, who first joined the department of manuscripts at the British Museum in 1841 and rose to be a first class assistant in 1879, compiled an index to the *Heralds' Visitations* and was the author of *A manual for the genealogist, topographer, antiquary and legal professor*, which was first published in London in 1856 and was by 1888 in its third edition. In it, Sims wrote that:

... since the appearance of [*Origines genealogicae* (1828)] the study of Genealogy has been advanced in many ways. The voluminous publications of the Record Commissioners ... have afforded invaluable assistance to the Historian, whilst the works of Burke, Lodge, Berry, Nichols, Nicolas, and many other zealous labourers in the field, have tended to simplify and popularize this interesting study.⁴⁰¹

The manual begins with an explanation of the evidential value of records, defined as signifying “an authentic testimony in writing preserved in Courts of Record”, and explains the principle of custodianship.⁴⁰² Sims also directs his readers to works on diplomatics and palaeography, before going on to describe different classes of “public records; parochial and other registers; wills; county and family histories; heraldic collections in public

³⁹⁸ Bell, *The Huntingdon Peerage*, p. 295.

³⁹⁹ Emma Elizabeth Thoyts, 'Lost Register Books', *Notes and Queries*, (1891), 381-2, p. 382; Emma Elizabeth Thoyts, *How to Decipher and Study Old Documents* (London, 1893).

⁴⁰⁰ Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah A. Torres, 'AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise', *American Archivist*, 66 (2003), 51-78.

⁴⁰¹ Sims, *A Manual for the Genealogist, Topographer, Antiquary, and Legal Professor*, p. vi.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, p.ix.

libraries.”⁴⁰³ Here we have an example of public information about archives and archival principles that predates the development of archival science as a discipline.

In addition, Victorian genealogical guides provide some of the earliest user assessments of the PRO. In the 1880s, in his *Records and Record Searching: a guide to the genealogist and topographer*, Rye described the physical limitations of previous accommodation:

Few of those who frequent the comfortable and convenient literary Search-room at the Public Record Office in Fetter Lane, have any idea of the inconveniences which attached to those who, like myself, used to search twenty-five years ago in a long unpleasant room, with low tables and high backless forms, which cramped the searcher's legs if he were anything above a dwarf in stature.⁴⁰⁴

The new premises built in Fetter Lane was also matched by a general respect for genealogical researchers, where:

the beginner, stumbling along, and only half conscious as to what he is looking for, is as well treated and listened to as patiently as the *habitué* ... all searchers, however different their objects, are welcome.⁴⁰⁵

Rye describes the PRO as a kind of academy amenable to the genealogist, where “the present and past staff may be said to be teachers of record school or university, to the very great advantage of the amateur students.”⁴⁰⁶ In this way, these guides not only attest to the existence of the amateur student of genealogy as a class of reader, but they also demonstrate that they used and cared about archives both at the national and the local level.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also witnessed the more successful organization of genealogical interest groups. The Genealogical Co-operative Research Club (GCRC) was established in 1893. Lead by Charles A. Bernau, the GCRC indexed different classes of records at the PRO. In 1907 Bernau compiled the *International Genealogical Directory*, the official organ of the Convention Internationale D'Heraldique. The *Directory* gave the names of 1,387 contributors, their research interests and addresses from across the European and the Anglo-phone world. The main object of Bernau's *Directory* was to “introduce to each other those who are interested in the history of the

⁴⁰³ ‘Frontispiece’, *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ Walter Rye, *Records and Record Searching: A Guide to the Genealogist and Topographer* (London: Elliot Stock, A.H. Goose, 1888), p. 103.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

same families.”⁴⁰⁷ It included information about publications of interest to genealogists from Ireland, North of France and the Channel Islands; an “Authors exchange” in which copies of surplus genealogical publications could be exchanged; and a list of recently printed pedigrees in private circulation, which was cross-referenced with the contributors. Even though such activities are not as evident or speedy as they are on the Internet, this demonstrates that genealogical interests were being pursued in a co-operative, interactive manner at the turn of the twentieth century. As Bernau stated, it gave “the ordinary person, with no opportunity for research at first hand, and by merely putting pen to paper, the means of addressing his inquiries in the right direction.”⁴⁰⁸

However, this method of communication raised the issue of professionalization, which, as I argued in Chapter One, has continued to plague genealogy. The Shipway case had highlighted the amateur status of genealogy. As noted in *The Times*:

Mr Phillimore’s fireproof repositories will not save the public from much mischievous deception while the belief prevails that any one is qualified for antiquarian research, and that a trifling sum is sufficient reward for such services.⁴⁰⁹

Bernau also had to deal with similar issues of trust. The exchange of knowledge was primarily based on “friendly correspondence”. Consequently, Bernau warned his subscribers that if one wanted to be marked as a professional in his directory they would have to abide by the laws of professional etiquette. As he explained:

One amateur ... wrote that he feared that a professional might ‘lure him into a friendly correspondence about his family, and then send in a bill!’ [...] in order to allay any nervousness which amateur genealogists may feel on this account, I hereby notify all the professional genealogists ... that when they correspond with any other contributor to it, using the name of the ‘Directory’ as an introduction, it must be on the clear understanding that they abide by the etiquette of their profession ... unless they notify such correspondents to the contrary before any fees are incurred.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁷ Charles A. Bernau, *The International Genealogical Directory*. Vol. 1 (England: Pender, Walton-on-Thames, 1907), p. 4.

⁴⁰⁸ Charles A. Bernau, 'The International Genealogical Directory, 1907', *The Pedigree Register*, 1 (1907), 48.

⁴⁰⁹ 'The sentence passed on Davies [Editorial] '.

⁴¹⁰ Charles A. Bernau, *The International Genealogical Directory*. 2nd edn (London: Gresbam Press, 1909), pp. vi-vii.

It was not until the establishment of The Association of Genealogists and Record Agents in 1968 that an annual list of competent professionals was published.⁴¹¹ Bernau, however, considered that a professional demarcation “would be very unfair, because practically every professional genealogist is interested in a non-professional manner in families with which he is connected. A distinctive mark would probably deter fellow-contributors from entering into a ‘friendly correspondence’ with him about such families.”⁴¹² In this way, the amateur status of genealogy has from its beginnings been rooted in an altruistic exchange of knowledge and still today online epistemological communities enjoy the benefits of a “gift economy”, although, as Lambert argues, this is being eroded through an increase in commercial genealogical services.⁴¹³

Rather than being a phenomenon that “started literally on the doorstep and owed nothing to outside influence”, family history does have a pedigree.⁴¹⁴ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, genealogists campaigned for the care of local records at the highest level. They formed groups, locally, nationally and internationally in order to share and exchange knowledge. They clubbed together to make heraldic visitations and parish registers available to a wider public. As it became cheaper to print and as the spread of literacy was supported by a new network of local libraries, many also published their family histories. The rise and spread of history in Britain was not only due to the establishment of the PRO, the work of the HMC and translation of Ranke: antiquarians played a significant part and a majority of them were driven by genealogical interests. Whilst I have examined the spread of genealogical interest amongst the antiquarian community in the public sphere, the circulation of genealogical knowledge in the private sphere of the home and family has not been investigated. The private sphere of the home is a gendered space, and Pearce goes so far as to argue that the material culture of the home is matrilineal.⁴¹⁵ It is to an investigation of gender and genealogy, and their connection to domestic recordkeeping, that we shall now turn.

⁴¹¹ Hilary Marshall, 'The Aims and Activities of the Association of Genealogists and Record Agents', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 14:2 (1993), 197-99.

⁴¹² Bernau, *The International Genealogical Directory*, pp. vi-vii.

⁴¹³ Lambert, 'Descriptive, narrative, and experiential pathways to symbolic ancestors', p. 330.

⁴¹⁴ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol 1, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, p. 148.

⁴¹⁵ Susan M. Pearce, 'The construction of heritage: The domestic context and its implications', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 4:2 (1998), 86-102, p. 95.

Gender and Genealogy

Women have played an important role in what Woolf has termed, “the ‘social circulation’ of historical knowledge.”⁴¹⁶ It is, however, difficult to tell to what extent. Whilst the role of women in the development of local history has begun to be investigated, there is still work to be done on the female contribution to genealogy. This is partly because there is confusion over what is ‘genealogical’, as opposed to local, topographical or biographical history, as Joan Thirsk writes: “A fresh examination of women’s contribution to family history is needed, illuminated by the proposition that their themes and style are unlikely to be severely genealogical.”⁴¹⁷ While by no means comprehensive, this section seeks to remedy this.

Women were excluded from being ‘professional’ genealogists in that they could not be a herald or a peerage lawyer. They represented a small minority of the Harleian Society, varying between two and a half per cent to four per cent of members between 1871 and 1895.⁴¹⁸ The proportion of women included in the *International Genealogical Directory* (1907) is higher, with approximately thirteen per cent listed, of whom three – all American – were described as “professional” genealogists.⁴¹⁹ Approximately six per cent of British family history titles published between 1842 and 1927 were written by women.⁴²⁰ However, these figures are misleading because they do not take into account names where the gender was not indicated so the proportion of female members or writers may have been higher. As for the number of female literary applicants to the PRO listed between 1852 and 1866, only twenty-nine out of nine hundred and forty-three applicants were women, representing only three per cent of the total number of applicants. Out of these twenty-nine females, twenty-four per cent were specifically carrying out genealogical research, and approximately twenty-one per cent were categorized as carrying out “General Literary” inquiries. Of the remainder, some were accompanying their male relatives and

⁴¹⁶ Daniel R. Woolf, 'A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre, and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800', *American Historical Review*, (1997), 645-79, p. 647.

⁴¹⁷ Joan Thirsk, 'women local and family historians', in *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*, ed. by David Hey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 498-504, p. 503.

⁴¹⁸ Harleian Society, 'Report for the Year 1893', in *Familiae Minorum Gentium*, ed. by John W. Clay (London: Wardour Press, 1894); Harleian Society., 'Annual Report for 1870-71, Rules and List of Members'; Harleian Society., 'Annual Report 1879-1880, Rules and List of Members'; Harleian Society., 'Report for year ending 1889, Rules and List of Members'; Harleian Society., 'Report for year ending 1894, Rules and List of Members'.

⁴¹⁹ 184 out of the 1387 people listed in the directory are women. This higher proportion may be explained by the inclusion of persons from the USA, where women played an important role in the GSU (which was founded in 1894). In addition, the proportion of women was likely to have been larger because not all female names were prefixed with 'Mrs', 'Miss' etc. Bernau, *The International Genealogical Directory*.

⁴²⁰ Thomson, *A Catalogue of British Family Histories*.

acting as scribes. Others, however, were independently undertaking historical research into various subjects such as monasteries, Arabella Stewart, the laws of England, the early history of Scotland, the “lives of the princesses of England”, the “history of lace”, and “literary purposes connected with social science.”⁴²¹

Historical research carried out by women is often hidden. This is partly because the typical tasks assigned to women – editing, transcribing and researching – were not as evident as publication. Some traces of this hidden role still exist in the archives, such as a reference in 1832 to a Miss Birkenhead in a letter from Phillipps to Madden, offering to undertake to transcribe a pedigree of the Thistlewayte family in gratitude for attentions given to her at the British Museum.⁴²² Or in the frontispieces of publications, such as the acknowledgements by Bernau given to his wife and of T. R. Thomson to Miss Honor Blomfield for help with the compilation and editorship of the *International Genealogical Directory* and *A Catalogue of British Family Histories* respectively.⁴²³ In Rye’s list of recommended record searchers, four out of the thirteen listed were women and the two transcribers and the one recommended indexer were all female.⁴²⁴ Record searching, indexing and transcribing were no doubt occupations that perhaps appealed to the educated middle-class woman. Some women also contributed to the development of archival collections. Mrs Vernona Thomas Christian Smith (*nee* Torry, d.1902) compiled a collection of West Indian pedigrees, which was acquired by the Society of Genealogists in 1913. She worked for Vere Langford Oliver (d.1942) who used her research in his *History of the Island of Antigua* (1894).⁴²⁵ Seen as helpers and assistants – rather than principally as active historians – women were often overlooked. However, in the field of genealogy they were not completely unacknowledged. In the 1902 departmental committee report on local records E. A. Fry and Phillimore, saw a role for women in transcription and editing work. No doubt Phillimore appreciated the value of the work done by female volunteers in the publication of his *Index* series, and by women such as Mrs J. H. Glencross, who was one of the co-editors of *Cornwall Parish Registers*.⁴²⁶ Miss Ethel Stokes (d.1944) also

⁴²¹ TNA, Domestic Records of the Public Record Office, PRO 35/16.

⁴²² BL, Correspondence of Sir Frederic Madden, Add. Eng.2839 fol.249.

⁴²³ ‘...in particular, one energetic fresh helper has, done her utmost to make the appearance of my name on the title-page an even greater farce than it was in 1907’, Bernau, *The International Genealogical Directory*, p. vii; Thomson, *A Catalogue of British Family Histories*.

⁴²⁴ Rye, *Records and Record Searching: A Guide to the Genealogist and Topographer*, p. 108.

⁴²⁵ L. G. Pine, 'Genealogy since Horace Round', *Genealogist's Magazine*, 13-14 (1961), 307-17, p. 317.

⁴²⁶ James 1st Viscount Bryce, 'Report of the Committee appointed to inquire as to the existing arrangements for the collection and custody of Local Records, and as to further measures which it may be advisable to take for that purpose; Appendices', in *Records Local: Report of Committee* (HMSO, 1902), pp. 245-46, in

contributed to the second editions of Gibb's and Doubleday's *The Complete Peerage* (1900-1906).⁴²⁷

Within the field of genealogical reference, the Innes sisters played a significant part. In the mid-1820s, Anne, Eliza and Maria Innes compiled *Sam's Annual Peerage of the British Empire*, the first two-volumes of which are described by Anne as "two neatly bound and highly embellished little volumes, which we calculated to form an elegant appendage to the Drawing Room Table."⁴²⁸ They were published by Mr Sams of 1 St James' Street, London. Later, twenty-seven revised and enlarged editions were published as *The Annual Peerage* under the name of Edmund Lodge, Norroy King of Arms from 1833 to 1858. In December 1826 Anne Innes wrote to Grimaldi to ask for his recommendation of her proposed publication. This act demonstrates an astute business sense because it can be presumed that more copies would be sold if a man's name and professional reputation were attached to the publication, rather than a woman's. In this way, while women played a role in the social circulation of historical knowledge, and while it was acceptable for them to have literary interests, evidence of their presence in the circulation of public and printed genealogical works is veiled.

Aside from the female ghost compilers, transcribers and, in Round's words, the "wonderfully plain girls" who helped to compile the *Victoria County Histories*, was genealogy perceived to be more feminine and more suitable for the "drawing room table"?⁴²⁹ The private sphere of the family was certainly ascribed to the feminine sphere, as was letter-writing and an interest in personal minutiae. Letters from the 1720s detailing William Holman's genealogical investigations into his Essex ancestry often demonstrate how he was referred by local gentry and antiquarians to their "wives, mothers, and sisters as sources for reliable genealogical information."⁴³⁰ In 1884, Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) wrote that the "memories of ladies are excellent repositories of personal matters, dates, and other details; a family inquiry greatly interests them, and they are zealous correspondents."⁴³¹ Similarly, Phillimore wrote that ladies "especially, as a rule, will be

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online

<http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-

2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:fulltext:1902-002404> [accessed 12 June 2008].

⁴²⁷ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 387.

⁴²⁸ BL, Correspondence of Stacey Grimaldi, Add. 34188 f. 169.

⁴²⁹ Round cited by Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol 1, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, pp. 18-19.

⁴³⁰ Woolf, 'A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre, and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800', p. 654.

⁴³¹ Francis Galton, *Record of Family Faculties* (London: Macmillan, 1884), p. 13.

found to have retentive memories for matters of family history, and their information in relation to the present and preceding generation as a rule will be reliable.”⁴³² These perceptions are borne out by Bell’s recounting of the oral evidence of the former servant of Lady Ann Hastings in the *Huntingdon Peerage*, who – as he discovered – was maid to Hasting’s niece Lady Selina.⁴³³ Spying the former servant upon a carriage and perceiving that in “the old woman’s countenance, there was something written in every line of it, which inspired respect, and impressed a belief, that the mind indexed there had more than ordinary claims to attention”, Bell jumped into her carriage and found that: “Scarce had I pronounced the name [of Hastings], ere I found it was a chord I might touch till doomsday without tiring the patience of my companion.”⁴³⁴

However, the display of such genealogical knowledge in company was not always welcomed and reinforced stereotypical notions of female vanity and gossip. In *The Tatler*, Joseph Addison describes a meeting of women using the metaphor of a musical ensemble. One figure is a “Welsh harp”, which both confirms the Welsh stereotype as being obsessed with pedigree, and also is a pun on the idea of ‘harping’ on. He writes:

On the Right-Hand of the Hornpipe sat a Welsh Harp, an Instrument which very much delights in the Tunes of old Historical Ballads, and in celebrating the Renown’d Actions and Exploits of ancient *British* Heroes. By this instrument I therefore would describe a certain Lady, who is one of those Female Historians that upon all Occasions enters into Pedigrees and Descents, and finds her Self related, by some Off-shoot or other, to almost every great Family in *England*: For which Reason she jars and is out of Tune very often in Conversation, for the Company’s Want of due Attention and Respect to her.⁴³⁵

A similar Welsh stereotype can be seen in the character of Mrs Woodcourt in Charles Dickens’ *Bleak House* (1853), who rather than harping on about her English ancestry, boasts of her ancient Welsh ancestor, Morgan ap-Kerrig.⁴³⁶

While orality is associated with the feminine, so also is the domestic sphere of the home. The main audience for genealogy is the family itself; many family histories were privately published and research undertaken was a family affair. This can be seen in the Anna W.

⁴³² William P.W. Phillimore, *How to write the history of a family: A guide for the genealogist* (London: Elliot Stock, 1887), p. 164.

⁴³³ Bell, *The Huntingdon Peerage*, pp. 242-49.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.240,42.

⁴³⁵ Joseph Addison, *The Lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff Esq; Revised and Corrected by the Author*. Vol. 3, *The Tatler* ([London], 1712) p. 214, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>> [accessed 22 January 2008].

⁴³⁶ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*. ed. by Nicola Bradbury (London: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 278.

Merivale's *Family Memorials* (1884). The work is prefaced by an explanation from her elder brother, "the eldest survivor of the race", who describes who was involved in its creation:

The history of the family was taken up by my eldest sister, Louisa Anne, at the point where our grandmother left it, and continued by her to the period of our father's death. The greater part of the memoir thus written by her is here printed. These Memorials have been compiled by Anna Wilhelmina, my father's youngest daughter, with some assistance from myself, and the addition of a few incidental notices. It is my sister's desire that I write this prefatory explanation, as the eldest survivor of the race, now fifty, I believe, in number.⁴³⁷

Whilst the volume includes memoirs written by male family members and is introduced by the male 'head' of the family, the task of compiling and editing the work as a continuous history was passed from grandmother to granddaughter, and from older to younger sister, making the work a family project.

Genealogy was also a didactic tool and perhaps had an important role in childrearing. The family memorial written by Merivale's German grandmother, Ann Katenkamp in 1809 is clear in her purpose. Not only will the family's genealogy be "exactly ascertained", but also the history would be historically edifying in that it would show "the Manners of the Times, the influence of Education and surrounding circumstance on the mind, and the amelioration of the human Character." The latter reason is perhaps the most significant for Katenkamp – like Dugdale and other antiquarians her aim is to provide examples of virtue and vice:

The History of virtuous Ancestors may also prove a powerful incentive to Virtue in their Posterity; while the Miseries which are clearly shewn to have been the consequence of Error or Misconduct, may serve as a Beacon to warn future Navigators on the sea of Life from venturing on the same shore and making a like shipwreck of their Peace.

Overall, her motivation is guided by her Christian faith:

... by tracing real events through a long series of years as they have affected the various branches of single Families, 'the Ways of God to Man' will be more ably and satisfactorily vindicated. Effects may be more clearly traced back to their causes, this World will more evidently appear to be a state of Trial

⁴³⁷ Charles Merivale, 'Preface' in Anna Wilhelmina Merivale, *Family Memorials* (Exeter: Thomas Upward, 1884), pp. viii-ix.

only, where much of human misery will be found to be the natural consequence of Vice.⁴³⁸

From such a standpoint, the written family history acts as a spiritual and moral guide that does not die with the author but which is passed on through the generations. Katenkamp sees the project not as finished but an on going one:

... which I hope will be carried on by my Children and their Descendants through many future Generations; being convinced that a Family History, written as much as possible without partiality or prejudice, may convey, not merely amusement for a few leisure hours, but much valuable information and instruction.⁴³⁹

Women in particular were charged with not only the duty of childbearing, but also often as the spiritual and moral guide for the family and here we find Katenkamp taking up this role.

Some women not only wrote family narratives, but also depicted their family pedigree. A large family tree delineated by Elizabeth Dunbar before her death in 1814, aged twenty, shows the lineage of the “House of Dunbar”.⁴⁴⁰ The original was approximately five feet long and demonstrates Elizabeth’s skills in draughtsmanship. Each member of the family, or each marriage, is written in a small circle which is placed into the naturalistic drawing of a tree, with roots, branches and leaves. The roots show the family’s royal connections to “Ethered King of England” and “King Kenneth McCalpin 839”, while the up-most branches show relatives from the late eighteenth century (only their Christian names are displayed implying that they were children when the pedigree was drawn). Marriages between various branches of the family are shown by small horizontal lines made of interlocking leaves. Heiresses, wives, daughters and sisters are depicted but the line of ascent and title is predominately patrilineal. The successive Earls of Dunbar are placed on the trunk of the tree, providing a visual sense of continuity. These include notes on Earls who had no male issue, such as: “George Earl of D & M was arbitrarily forfeited for his father’s alleged treason ob. 1435 left no issue.” The visual metaphor of the tree emphasizes both the natural progression of time and also constancy and dependability, and integrates the family into a related whole. In this way, while it can be argued that women were put off from studying genealogy because it was “customary among genealogists to cut short the family trees of women and concentrate on descent in the male line”, the delineation of

⁴³⁸ Ibid., pp.119-20.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ The Hunterian Museum and Gallery, University of Glasgow, Dunbar Family Tree, GLAHM, C.1965.15.

pedigree was used by some women as a vehicle for displaying their artistic skills, and as a way of commemorating and tracking family relations through time.⁴⁴¹

As the sphere of the home became feminised, women perhaps took up the role of the family archivist. Many women – particularly of the upper-classes – would be familiar with the documents of the home and “if most could not handle the languages of antiquity, they were at least well acquainted with the vernacular family documents of the more recent past (pedigrees, conveyances, and the like).”⁴⁴² The only female genealogist mentioned in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, is the sister of Florence Nightingale, Lady Frances Parthenope Verney, (1819–1890).⁴⁴³ In 1858 she married the MP, Sir Harry Verney, second baronet (1801-1894) and moved into the family seat at Claydon House, Buckinghamshire where she “threw herself into the congenial task of rescuing and renewing the interesting family relics which were falling into decay.”⁴⁴⁴ For women like her, such as Anne Clifford (1590-1676) countess of Dorset and Pembroke whose diaries brimmed “full with interest in her forebears”, the country seat and family were symbiotically related.⁴⁴⁵ Part of Verney’s work of “rescuing and renewing the interesting family relics,” included the ordering of the vast family archives.⁴⁴⁶ This role enabled her to write *The House of Claydon and its Inhabitants, from 1480 to 1769* and – with the encouragement of the historian, Samuel R. Gardiner – volume one and the draft of volume two of *Memoirs of the Verney Family during the Civil War* (1892), which in turn was completed by Sir Harry’s daughter-in-law, Margaret Maria Verney.

It is significant that Verney was a writer because fiction, especially romantic literature, was one area assigned to the feminine sphere. Woolf argues that “the making of modern genres

⁴⁴¹ Thirsk, 'women local and family historians', p. 503.

⁴⁴² Woolf, 'A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre, and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800', p. 651.

⁴⁴³ This was based on an online advanced search for 'female' and 'genealogist'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/search/people/index.jsp>> [accessed 24 January 2008]

⁴⁴⁴ Margaret Maria Verney, 'Memoir', p.xi, cited by John D. Haigh, 'Verney, Frances Parthenope, Lady Verney (1819-1890)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46562>> [accessed 24 January 2008].

⁴⁴⁵ Ketelaar, 'The Genealogical Gaze: Family Identities and Family Archives in the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries', pp. 19-20; Woolf, 'A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre, and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800', p. 652.

⁴⁴⁶ Eric Ketelaar describes how the Verney family’s own interest in its history helped the creation and the maintenance of their family archive, as “each generation taught the next to protect the papers that recorded their family history” enabling the family to amass one of the largest collection of private family letters in Europe. Ketelaar, 'The Genealogical Gaze: Family Identities and Family Archives in the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries', pp. 18-19.

is...intimately bound up with the making of modern gender.’⁴⁴⁷ Part of the development of genealogy as a distinct and gendered genre, was to separate it from history proper and to distinguish professional historical discourse by marking out its position in relation to “sacred and profane, general histories and epitomes, true histories and fictional ones.”⁴⁴⁸ I have already examined part of this process of placing genealogy on historical grounds by describing how Freeman and Round contrasted their historical work from the “monstrous fictions” of Burke.⁴⁴⁹ Similarly, Fraser’s “solid facts” found in the repository were distinguished from “the vain imaginings” of “pseudo-historical” writers who “find their materials in the absurdly romantic traditions of a locality”.⁴⁵⁰ In terms of binary opposition, solid facts can be considered to be masculine attributes, while vain, fictional imaginings – and indeed the landscape itself – are considered to be feminine. This has led to a gendering of the evidentiary paradigm. When describing the sources which he used in his study, Edward Hoare typically boasts:

I have gone to the fountainhead for every information, regardless of time, expense, or trouble. Nearly all such has been obtained from Legal sources and evidences, Public Records, Wills, Heraldic and Funeral Visitations, Family Deeds and Documents, Broad-sides, Parish Registers, Old Pedigrees, Manuscripts, Family Letters, and most of the best Periodicals, Journals, Magazines, and Papers of the times. I have discarded all hearsay tales, old women’s gossip, and foolish fables, and sifted every thing with care ...⁴⁵¹

Here, oral evidence – feminized as “old women’s gossip” – is discarded in favour of sanctioned written archival and published material.

To some extent history was characterized as a professional, academic and an implicitly masculine object of study. The object of ‘proper’ history was emphasized as that of the nation. While Stubbs described genealogy as a “very natural instinct” that had nothing in it that “need be stigmatized as vain and foolish”; he nevertheless couched the study in terms of the nation: genealogy “furnished the bone and sinew of national action” and was one area in which “a general interest in national history may be expected to grow.”⁴⁵² It is perhaps also significant that Stubbs uses physical metaphors to describe genealogy, as the body was assigned to the feminine, whereas the mind was masculine. Even if he is linking

⁴⁴⁷ Woolf, 'A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre, and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800', p. 647.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., p.648.

⁴⁴⁹ Freeman, 'Pedigrees and Pedigree-Makers', pp. 12-13.

⁴⁵⁰ Donaldson, *Sir William Fraser: The Man and His Work*, pp. 61-65.

⁴⁵¹ 'Preface', Edward Hoare, *Some Account of the Early History and Genealogy ... Of the Families of Hore and Hoare, with all their branches* (London: Alfred Russell Smith, 1883), p. viii.

⁴⁵² Stubbs cited in flyleaf by Round, *Studies in Peerage and Family History*.

it with the history of the nation, it is perceived as not fully formed: it is a “natural instinct” and is “expected to grow.” In contrast, Stubbs’ own historical work was characterized as masculine. In 1875, Gladstone wrote to Stubbs congratulating him on the publication of his *Constitutional History*, stating that he was “convinced that the thorough [...] study of history is a noble, invigorating manly study, essentially political and judicial, fitted for [...] a free country.”⁴⁵³ In this way, national life and national history were for the most part politically and implicitly “manly” pursuits that took place in the “essentially political and judicial” domain of the masculine sphere.

The new type of Rankeian scholarship based on archival research and the seminar was also gendered. In particular, the seminar was seen as a masculine preserve.⁴⁵⁴ In contrast to the active masculine work of the seminar, the material of the archive was feminized.⁴⁵⁵ Very often the archive was described in terms of being a natural raw material or landscape, in which the scholar had to explore, examine, seize and take hold of, or mine for facts. Sometimes this process of archival access was naturalized into a highly gendered language of conquest. Ranke famously described archives as “so many princesses, possibly beautiful, all under a curse and needing to be saved.”⁴⁵⁶ In reference to a closed archive, he described it as “still absolutely a virgin. I long for the moment I shall have access to her and make my declaration of love, whether she is pretty or not.”⁴⁵⁷ In this way, historical knowledge was expressed in heroic, gendered terms – archives could be conquered and in their passive feminisation were the perfect compliment to masculine effort.

Yet through the employment of domestic archives, genealogy challenges the traditional evidentiary paradigm. Woolf argues that the family “lay at the heart of the female understanding of the past” and therefore, in this way, “affective ties in the present provided

⁴⁵³ Gladstone, 27 December 1875 cited by Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886*, p. 37.

⁴⁵⁴ The lack of the adoption of the seminar in Britain may be a reason why history in Britain became to be seen as a fitting object of study for women. Woolf writes that “the failure of the universities to embrace anything approximating the German system may paradoxically have allowed late Victorian women, many of whom were now students in female-only colleges, the opportunity actually to do historical research and get it published.”, Woolf, p.687; For a discussion of the gendering of the seminar as masculine, see Bonnie G. Smith, 'Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth-Century', *American Historical Review*, (1995), 1150-89.

⁴⁵⁵ Traces of gendered tropes can still be seen in historians writings today. For example, Ludmilla Jordanova warns her readers against the ‘seductive’ cult of the archive. Ludmilla J. Jordanova, 'The Cult of the Archive', in *History in Practice* (London: Hodder, 2006), pp. 160-63.

⁴⁵⁶ Ranke cited by Leonard Kreiger, *Ranke: The Meaning of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 105.

⁴⁵⁷ Ranke cited by Ibid.

a lens through which history could be ‘domesticated’.⁴⁵⁸ Some of the most important genealogical sources are domestic, epitomised by the family Bible and the embroidered sampler – the latter of which were increasingly used throughout the nineteenth century to commemorate family events.⁴⁵⁹ A copy of a sampler sewn by Jane Borthwick in c.1840 giving details of the births, marriages and deaths of her family has proved to be a useful source of information for the genealogist, Ann Carson, because it has provided information which she has been unable to trace in official archives. Not only is the sampler more complete, but it may also be a more reliable record, as Carson explains: “William Murray Borthwick's birthdate is stated to be 5 May 1782. In the Moffat Parish records however it is said that he was born on 13 May 1782. His headstone also says 13 May 1782. And yet it would be most unlikely that his daughter, sewing the sampler in 1840s when she was living with her parents, would make an error about her father's birthdate.”⁴⁶⁰ In contrast to public archives, the location of genealogical material within the domestic and private sphere is perhaps one of the reasons why it has a dubious status within academic circles. Time and time again genealogical guides recommend talking to relatives – usually female relatives, such as maiden aunts – as their first point of call. Unlike archives, which were seen as ‘other’ and in Ranke’s terms ‘virginal’, this information was held by women in a feminized domestic space and as such, did not present such an opportunity to be conquered. For some, like Hoare, rather than acting as a foil to masculine endeavour, domestic archives were seen as emasculating the researcher through their feminizing influence, or, at the very least could not be taken seriously.

As the literary critic, Tess O’Toole argues, it is the woman that “characteristically holds an ambiguous place in the ancestral plot: she is both essential to it and somehow peripheral to it. This curious positioning reflects woman’s relation to history.”⁴⁶¹ Verney did not write the history of her biological family but that of her husband’s. In Marshall’s work, *The Genealogist’s Guide*, he defined a pedigree as any descent to three generations in the male line.⁴⁶² In an essay published as part of Bernau’s *Genealogist’s Pocket Library* series,

⁴⁵⁸ Woolf, ‘A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre, and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800’, p. 655.

⁴⁵⁹ Peter Benes and D. Brenton Simons, *The Art of Family: Genealogical Artifacts in New England* (Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002); Pamela Claburn, *Samplers* (Princes Risborough: Shire, 1986), p. 20.

⁴⁶⁰ Ann Carson, *The Borthwick Sampler*, (2001)
<<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~anncarson/Borthwick/sampler1840.htm>> [accessed 16 June 2009].

⁴⁶¹ Tess O’Toole, *Genealogy and Fiction in Hardy: Family Lineage and Narrative Lines* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 15.

⁴⁶² George W. Marshall, *The Genealogist's Guide to Printed Pedigrees* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1879), p. vi.

Percival Lucas noted that: “In England a pedigree of ascendants, other than those of the direct male line, has ... neither legal, nor heraldic, nor social value.”⁴⁶³ This emphasis is extended to Western naming practices. As the historian, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich commented when reflecting upon introducing herself at a Thatcher family reunion:

I am not just a daughter of Kenneth Thatcher, but a daughter of Alice Siddoway, who was the daughter of Alice Harries who was the daughter of Mary Rees who was the daughter of Eleanor Thomas, and there was no way on earth that I would be able to say that at a family reunion – unless it was a reunion celebrating me.⁴⁶⁴

She concluded that: “It is thus not biology that makes me a Thatcher, but law, culture, and convenience.”⁴⁶⁵ Within such a culture, it can be argued that the male desire to continue their name through the generations is arguably borne out of anxiety that the child is not theirs. In this way, the name is a substitute for the guarantee of fatherhood. Naming ambivalently fixes the origins of a child and is a celebration of the father’s generative power, while at the same time it also reveals the father’s lack of control over their progeny.⁴⁶⁶ This anxiety can be seen in Bernau’s writings:

In view of the fact that children are nurtured (both before and immediately after birth) by the mothers, surely they must be considered as more the natural property of the maternal than the paternal family, though we men, being the Lords of Creation, make them bear their father's surname. A most unsatisfactory custom for another reason is the fact that at birth there is unhappily sometimes a doubt as to the natural father of a child but never any as to its mother.⁴⁶⁷

Genealogy, with its emphasis on male lineage and nomenclature can be seen as a compensatory extension of this deep-seated anxiety over origins. It is probably because, as Donald Akenson argues, genealogies are ultimately based on the narrative kernel that “a woman gave birth to a child who lived”, that there is a greater emphasis and anxiety about the male line.⁴⁶⁸ This ambivalent position of the female biological role will be further

⁴⁶³ Percival Lucas, 'Seize Quarters and Ascending Pedigrees', in *Quarter Sessions, Seize Quarters Etc.* ([London], 1909), pp. 36-77, p. 36.

⁴⁶⁴ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, 'Creating Lineages', in *The Art of Family: Genealogical Artifacts in New England*, ed. by Peter Benes and D. Brenton Simons (Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002), pp. 5-11, p. 5.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁴⁶⁶ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 28-29.

⁴⁶⁷ Charles A. Bernau, 'Hereditary Tendencies in Female Descents', *Pedigree Register*, 1:3 (1907), 49-52, p. 52.

⁴⁶⁸ Akenson, *Some Family: The Mormons and How Humanity Keeps Track of Itself*, p. 80.

examined below, when the genealogy's connection with eugenics and the development of national and ethnic identity will be discussed.

Eugenics and Genealogy

During the nineteenth century the rise in democracy and the drawing up of citizen's rights curtailed inherited privilege. Lowenthal argues that this shift emphasized national ancestry, which in turn contributed to the development of eugenics.⁴⁶⁹ As national ancestry was reinforced and inherited privilege waned, genealogy did not disappear but took on different tone. Coined in 1883 from the Greek for 'good stock', eugenics was initially defined as the "science of improving stock."⁴⁷⁰ As a "science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn quality of a race", eugenics had a broad scope.⁴⁷¹ It attracted an eclectic mix from both sides of the political spectrum, a situation which was to some extent mirrored by the small and elite membership of the Eugenics Education Society that was formed in Britain in 1907 in order "to educate the public in eugenics".⁴⁷² Despite its definition as a "science", the movement lacked ideological clarity and was open to a varied range of opinions, as Richard Soloway writes: "its adherents were never entirely certain whether they were promoting a science, a social science, or even a new religion".⁴⁷³ This section does not provide a comprehensive history of the movement, neither is it an apology for eugenics, rather it seeks to examine the influence of eugenics upon genealogical practice, an influence which extended beyond the activities of the Eugenics Education Society to encompass broader preoccupations with national ancestry.

Such an investigation into eugenics is pertinent because notions of biological heredity are closely linked with family history. Today, "the pedigree is a staple of human genetics, depicting both family relationships and trait transmission."⁴⁷⁴ As outlined in Chapter One, DNA-genealogy provides people with identities that evoke notions of "genetic

⁴⁶⁹ Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, p. 194.

⁴⁷⁰ Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (London: Macmillan, 1883), p. 25.

⁴⁷¹ Francis Galton, 'Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 10:1 (1904), 1-25, p. 1, *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2762125>> [accessed 7 January 2009].

⁴⁷² Wellcome Library, Eugenics Education Society archives, SA/EUG/B.11. The Eugenics Education Society, later known as the Eugenics Society, attracted such distinguished members as Dr Marie Stopes (1920-59), W. B. Yeats (1937-8), Aldous Huxley (1933-37), Sir Charles Dodds (1952-62), Sir Julian Huxley (1928-69) and Capt. G. H. L. F. Pitt-Rivers (1921-37).

⁴⁷³ Richard Allen Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-century Britain* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. xviii.

⁴⁷⁴ Ricki Lewis, 'The evolution of a classic genetic tool', *BioScience*, 44:11 (1994), 722-27, p. 722.

essentialism.”⁴⁷⁵ Similarly, developments in genetics and biotechnology mean that the questions that the eugenics movement introduced are still with us.⁴⁷⁶ Firstly, this section outlines the various ways in which the notion of heredity and the genealogical model was used within various different disciplines. It then goes on to examine the relationship between genealogical practice and eugenics in more detail.

It is perhaps no accident that the Eugenics Society was generously supported by the Australian sheep-farmer, Henry Twitchin who was attracted to the study of eugenics mainly, “through his experiences as a large stockbreeder in Australia.”⁴⁷⁷ Interest in heredity was fundamental to husbandry, where there was a vested interest in predicting the characteristics of offspring and crops, particularly within the colonial context.⁴⁷⁸ The links between stockbreeding and imperialist nation-building, as Sarah Franklin notes, were re-enforced through powerful genealogical metaphors. Referring to the sheep stockbreeder, John Macarthur, who was credited with breeding a productive sheep suited to the Australian climate and for being one of the founding fathers of the Australian nation, she writes:

This generic genealogical work of nation generation noticeably relies on a depiction of shared substance through which the constitutions of sheep and men are combined to found nationhood in enterprise. The work of genealogy being performed through John Macarthur and his sheep is also that of strengthening the lineages that link Australia to Britain through shared blood and wool, shared ancestry, and shared commerce.⁴⁷⁹

The genealogical metaphor of patrilineal descent was one that was simultaneously applied to the acts of domestication involved in colonialism, stockbreeding and nation-building.

Notions to do with hereditary transmission could also be found within the emergent discipline of ethnography and the debate between polygenesisists and monogenesisists. Within the theological context, the issue was whether all races and nations were descended from

⁴⁷⁵ Brodwin, 'Genetics, Identity, and the Anthropology of Essentialism', p. 328.

⁴⁷⁶ For example, Simon Baron-Cohen has argued that if pre-natal tests for autism were introduced, it might lead to less gifted mathematicians being born, thereby adversely affecting society. Simon Baron-Cohen, *Autism test 'could hit maths skills'*, (London: BBC Today programme, 7 January 2009) <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7736196.stm>> [accessed 7 January 2009].

⁴⁷⁷ WL, SA/EUG/B.11; Eugenics Society., *Annual report* (London: Eugenics Education Society, 1930-31), p. 1.

⁴⁷⁸ John C. Waller, 'Ideas of Heredity, Reproduction and Eugenics in Britain, 1800-1875', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 32:3 (2001), 457-89.

⁴⁷⁹ Franklin, *Dolly Mixtures: The Remaking of Genealogy*, pp. 147-48.

Noah or not. John Thomas Painter, for example, was a monogenesist, accordingly, his *Ethnology* (1880) was written:

To show that as all nations are only divisions and branches of various races who came from Adam and Noah, they ought not to look upon one another as inferior beings, or to have so much prejudice against one another, they all being equal.⁴⁸⁰

Such a view had a political import as “it influenced the white man’s conception of his rights and duties with respect to colonial peoples.”⁴⁸¹

While he was not the first to do so, within natural history, the question of how to classify and account for the different varieties and species within the natural order was taken up by Charles Darwin. In his *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859), Darwin argued that each species was not independently created but were lineal descents of others. The biological classification of life was based on the genealogical model of descent with modification: “the innumerable species, genera, and families of organic beings, with which this world is peopled, have all descended, each within its own class or group, from common parents, and have all been modified in the course of descent.”⁴⁸² In this way, the genealogical model of hierarchical descent was applied to animal pedigrees, the descent of peoples from Adam, the growth of nations and colonies, and, following Darwin, evolutionary phylogenetic trees.

Yet the language of inheritance was primarily a legal one.⁴⁸³ Initially, the only metaphorical application of the term “hereditary” to the biological realm was in relation to diseases, in particular, scrofula, syphilis, gout and lunacy, of which the latter two were seen as mainly the preserve of the aristocracy with their consanguineous genealogies. For some, inherited financial privilege and the ties of financial settlement were intertwined with inherited disease and “moral defects”. In 1841, Sir Anthony Carlisle was cited by Alexander Walker as saying that:

⁴⁸⁰ John Thomas Painter, *Ethnology: Or The History & Genealogy of the Human Race* (London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1880), p. iii.

⁴⁸¹ John C. Greene, *The Death of Adam: Evolution and its Impact on Western Thought* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1959), p. 221.

⁴⁸² Charles Darwin, 'On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life (1859)', in *From so simple a beginning: The four great books of Charles Darwin*, ed. by Edward O. Wilson (New York ; London: Norton, 2006), pp. 449-760, p. 740.

⁴⁸³ Staffan Müller-Wille and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Heredity Produced: At the Crossroads of Biology, Politics, and Culture, 1500-1870* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), p. 4.

The marriage of high rank and of hereditary wealth ... are generally concocted in their muniment rooms, where the estates of heirs and heiresses are entailed, together with the personal peculiarities, moral defects, and hereditary diseases of each family, and perpetuated as far as law, sheep-skins, signings and seals can extend them. Hence the frequent termination of such inbred races; while, in every ancient village, of considerable, though not shifting population, the names of humble families have continued for more ages; although ill recorded, than those of the proudest gentry.⁴⁸⁴

Disease and impotence were seen as hereditary, as part of an inheritance which worked against the family's perpetuity. The unrecorded humble families may not inherit land and title, but they also did not inherit disease and therefore their family names – the symbol of patrilineal continuity – had a longer and more stable lineage. The stereotype of the unproductive sickly aristocrat can be seen in works of fiction, such as the daughter of Lady Catherine de Burgh in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and in reality in the deformed inbred Hapsburgs, and was a cause for concern. The British polymath, Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), specifically blamed the decline of "men of eminent ability" on the peerage and their habit of marrying heiresses. He wrote:

I look upon the peerage as a disastrous institution, owing to its destructive effects on our valuable races. The most highly-gifted men are ennobled; their elder sons are tempted to marry heiresses, and their younger ones not to marry at all, for these have not enough fortune to support both a family and an aristocratical position. So the side-shoots of the genealogical tree are hacked off, and the leading shoot is blighted, and the breed is lost forever.⁴⁸⁵

In this way, primogeniture was seen as pathological. Whilst genealogy and inheritance was initially focussed narrowly on the inheritance of land and title, its association with disease and decline shifted attention widely onto biological inheritance.

As the nineteenth century progressed, urbanisation and industrialisation exacerbated health concerns. Heredity disease became not just the concern of individual aristocratic families but that of nation and the question of the extent to which diseases were inherited or caused by environmental conditions became more urgent, especially in relation to the lower classes. As doctors and physicians became more professional, they increasingly needed to diagnose which diseases were incurable in order to define and control the extent and scope of their influence. At the same time, professional and public health concerns were interwoven with the utilitarian development of statistics. On the one hand, the creation of

⁴⁸⁴ Sir Anthony Carlisle cited by Alexander Walker, *Intermarriage; or, The Natural Laws by Which Beauty, Health and Intellect, Result from Certain Unions, and Deformity, Disease and Insanity, from Others*. 2nd edn (London: John Churchill, 1841), p. 356.

⁴⁸⁵ Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences* (London: Macmillan, 1869), pp. 139-40.

not a result of the accumulation of individual wills, but was due to social conditions, conditions which could be manipulated. Farr was influenced by the Belgian ‘statist’, Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874), who was one of the principal witnesses in the 1833 Select Committee on Parochial Registration and whose recommendations led to the establishment of the GRO. His renowned statistical work, *Sur l’Homme et le Développement de ses Facultés* (1835), included a section on anthropometry entitled, ‘Development of Stature, Weight and Strength.’⁴⁹⁰ Borrowing conceptual tools from astronomy and probability theory, Quetelet observed that a social or anthropometrical corpus of data created a bell-shaped curve. He came to believe that this symmetrical binomial curve was the “mathematical expression of a fundamental social law”, in which the ‘average man’ – while fictional – became the ideal marker of social health and stability.⁴⁹¹

In the 1870s, Alphonse Bertillon (1853-1914), in his role as the director of the Identification Bureau of the Paris Prefecture of Police, further developed the techniques of anthropometry in order to create a means of identification through which recidivist activities could be controlled and reduced. His classification scheme was taken up in Britain when the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association was founded in 1875. In 1894 the Home Office adopted anthropometry as a method for identifying convicted criminals. Like Bertillon, Galton was keenly interested in anthropometry. However, for him it was not so much a means of identifying and capturing the individual criminal as a ‘scientific’ method for uncovering essential social and racial ‘types’. In his *Inquiries into human faculty and its development* (1883), Galton applied his cousin, Darwin’s theory of evolution to the study of man, coining the term ‘eugenics’. Fuelled by fears of ‘race suicide’ and hereditary degeneration, Galton sought to control and predict the future by recording and collating anthropometric data on the newly emerged lower and middle-classes in a pseudo-scientific manner. In 1884 Galton set up an anthropometric laboratory, first at the London Health Exhibition, where ten thousand persons were measured, and then three years later permanently at the Science exhibition at South Kensington Museum.

Galton’s work was based on mapping a hierarchical social model to the natural model of innate inherited characteristics; thereby subtly reproducing the values of the professional middle-classes and making them appear ‘natural’. The historian, Noel Annan argues that Galton’s *English Men of Science* (1874), which shows the interconnected pedigrees of

⁴⁹⁰ Goldman, ‘Statistics and the Science of Society in Early Victorian Britain; An Intellectual Context for the General Register Office’, p. 426.

⁴⁹¹ Allan Sekula, ‘The body and the archive’, *October*, 39 (1986), 3-64, pp. 21-22.

Playfair, Darwin and Wedgwood (which was connected with Galton's own), also illustrated "how certain families gain position and influence through persistent endogamy" to create a new kind of "intellectual aristocracy."⁴⁹² Levine also draws upon these genealogies to make the point that antiquarian groups' commitment to historical pursuits was "strengthened by a close sense of social belonging" that was often reinforced "in more intimate ways through marriage and family ties."⁴⁹³ Industrial and banking families can also be seen to form new networks of middle-class clan solidarity. The family history by Laurence Pullar, for example, is simultaneously a history of the Pullar Dye works in Perth. He writes: "It is worthy of note that the business from the outset consisted entirely of the family, and no other partner of any other family has ever been taken into 'Pullars.'"⁴⁹⁴ Many of these intellectuals and entrepreneurs socialized within their groups and often intermarried. Typically, the values of these professional middle-classes were based on the celebration of meritocracy. In this way, expertise and for some, the possession of an inborn mental ability or talent to "get on in the world" replaced the "old criteria of wealth and honour."⁴⁹⁵

Another feature of middle-class Victorian kinship is cousin marriage. Queen Victoria herself had married her first cousin and cousin marriages were a common feature of nineteenth-century novels. It is also apparent in the Galton, Darwin and Wedgwood pedigrees. Darwin married his cousin and sister-in-law Emma Wedgwood (his sister, Caroline, had married Emma's elder brother). He was greatly troubled by the potential ill-effects of the union and in 1870 drafted a question to be put to parliament by his friend, the anthropologist and MP John Lubbock, in order to persuade the house to include a question on cousin marriage in the upcoming census.⁴⁹⁶ Lubbock's request was laughed out of the house.⁴⁹⁷ However, Darwin's son, George, equipped with the statistical

⁴⁹² Noel G. Annan, 'The Intellectual Aristocracy', in *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G. M. Trevelyan*, ed. by J.H. Plumb (London: Longmans, Green 1955), pp. 243-87, pp. 253-54; Francis Galton, *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture* (London: Macmillan, 1874).

⁴⁹³ Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886*, p. 11.

⁴⁹⁴ Laurence Pullar, *Lengthening Shadows: Random Notes of a Family History Written in Old Age* ([S.l.]: For private circulation, 1910), p. 38.

⁴⁹⁵ Donald A. MacKenzie, *Statistics in Britain 1865-1930: The Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), p. 29.

⁴⁹⁶ Adam Kuper, 'Darwin's marriage, theories of heredity, and the origins of eugenics', *Seventh European Social Science History Conference* (unpublished transcript: Lisbon, 26 February 2008), p. 4.

⁴⁹⁷ Darwin referred to this incident in his *Descent of Man*: "When the principles of breeding and inheritance are better understood, we shall not hear ignorant members of our legislature rejecting with scorn a plan for ascertaining by an easy method whether or not consanguineous marriages are injurious to man." Charles Darwin, 'The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex (1871)', in *From so simple a beginning: The four great books of Charles Darwin*, ed. by Edward O. Wilson (New York: Norton, 2006), pp. 767-1248, p. 1247.

knowledge of Galton, set out to statistically map the frequency of cousin marriage in England in order to prove whether it was disadvantageous or not.⁴⁹⁸ It is perhaps for these social and biological reasons that the Victorian middle-classes were more concerned with their family histories than others.

Increasingly, a role was seen for family history in the management of human reproduction. In 1871 Darwin wrote that man “scans with scrupulous care the character and pedigree of his horses, cattle, and dogs before he matches them; but when he comes to his own marriage he rarely, or never, takes any such care.”⁴⁹⁹ In his pocket guide, *Quarter Sessions, Seize Quarters Etc.* (1909), Lucas echoed him suggesting:

... that genealogists should apply their art to the supreme object of assisting the scientific investigation of Heredity. The time will come – and students of Eugenics are hastening to forward it – when mankind will think as much of ‘good breeding,’ in its literal, which we hope is complementary, and not antagonistic, to its accepted sense, as do the owners of horses, dogs, cats, and even pigeons ... whose ascending pedigrees, many generations in length, are recorded in the archives of their respective ‘fancies,’ and constitute the paramount factor in the hands of the breeder.⁵⁰⁰

The eugenicist-genealogist could even achieve a professional status akin to the “parson, philosopher, and physician” by improving the physical and mental stock of the human race. In 1900, T. Thatcher argued that:

... the utmost care and scrutiny is bestowed upon tracing the history and pedigree of dog, horse, or cow, whilst the human animal, upon which so much depends, is entirely forgotten ... the most mysterious mental and physical complications which have puzzled alike parson, philosopher, and physician have been made as clear as the sun at noon day when viewed by the penetrating Rontgen rays of family history. I maintain that this study duly considered may become one of the mightiest levers for the development and improvement of the human race.⁵⁰¹

Here, family history has become as penetrating as a Rontgen ray, or x-ray. In this way, genealogy came to be seen by some as a scientific and modern tool, the ameliorative effects of which could impact the whole future of the human race.

⁴⁹⁸ George H. Darwin, 'Marriages Between First Cousins in England and Their Effects', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 38:2 (1875), 153-84, *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2338660>> [accessed 12 January 2009].

⁴⁹⁹ Darwin, 'The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex (1871)', p. 1247.

⁵⁰⁰ Lucas, 'Seize Quarters and Ascending Pedigrees', p. 36.

⁵⁰¹ T. Thatcher, 'Education & Family History', *Liverpool Mercury*, 12 September 1900, p. 9.

industrial towns were rejected on account of them being too weak and stunted to fight.⁵⁰⁶ These various concerns and fears created fertile soil in which eugenicist ideas could take root.

One response to these encroaching fears was to study, record and manage one's own family history. To this end, in 1884 Galton published two albums: the *Record of Family Faculties* and the *Life History Album*. With instructions on how to take profile and full-face photographs, colour-blindness tests and descriptions of measuring strength, they offered a more modern and 'scientific' way of recording one's own family history to that of the blank pages in the family Bible.⁵⁰⁷ The *Album* was intended for each child and the *Record* was intended for the history of the family as a whole, thereby bringing "together in a compact form the biological histories of many near relatives."⁵⁰⁸ In a letter to his publishers, Galton explained that "the two books play into each other's hands: the first deals with the Family, the second with the Individual [...] They are both the outcomes of the memoir on which my "Inquiries Human: Fac^b" was based."⁵⁰⁹ In *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (1883), Galton had stated that a study of eugenics should "chiefly be based upon records." Believing that "human eugenics will become recognised before long as a study of the highest practical importance", he declared that, "no time ought to be lost in encouraging and directing a habit of compiling personal and family histories."⁵¹⁰

The *Album* enabled parents to compile a family history by charting their child's development, providing a means whereby their own family traits could be monitored into the future. Following a schedule outlining the details of the mother's health, including "any strong mental impression, fright, shock, or fancy, occurring previous to the birth", and descriptions of the baby's physical features and comportment, it was divided into sections of five years to the age of twenty-five, with further pages for the next two twenty-five year periods. Each five year section provided a graph in which to plot the child's annual weight and height, and blank pages in which to record important life events.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁶ Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-century Britain*, p. 41.

⁵⁰⁷ Galton, *Record of Family Faculties*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁵⁰⁹ BL, Macmillan Archive, Add 55218, fol.3093.

⁵¹⁰ Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, pp. 44-45.

⁵¹¹ Francis Galton, *Life History Album* (London: Macmillan, 1884).

The *Record* stated that it was “designed for those who care to forecast the mental and bodily faculties of their children, and to further the science of heredity.”⁵¹² It included schedules for four generations of a ‘blood’ family, with additional pages for aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters, and other spaces for relations “of whom little is known.” Each schedule required date of birth, birthplace and residence “partial indicators of race and origin”, which would enable people to be sorted into “such elements as Scotch, Irish, Welsh, Saxon, Danish, or Norman”, age of marriage, mode of life, whether early life was laborious, height, adult hair colour, eye colour, general appearance, bodily strength and energy, keenness or imperfection of sight and other senses, mental powers and energy, character and temperament, favourite pursuits, interests and artistic aptitudes, minor and graver illnesses in youth and middle age, and cause, date and age at death.⁵¹³ It was recommended that documentary evidence should be inserted. Accordingly, the notes included information about genealogical sources, including an example of an extract from a death register and research fees for Somerset House.⁵¹⁴

Launched to coincide with the London Health Exhibition, Galton’s albums were endorsed by the Collective Investigation Committee of the British Medical Association. Despite the improbability of the desire of people to pay to have facts recorded that they would most earnestly wish to hide – especially from prospective marriage partners, he imagined that the albums would be taken up by the medical profession:

The doctors would puff it up among their patients, they would soon learn to say to each ‘show me your album’!; all the more, as they would get a fractional fee when they were desired to write brief notes in it of a past malady.⁵¹⁵

The albums were costly to produce, partly due to the inclusion of complicated parts, such as different strands of coloured wool to be used for colour blindness, and they did not appear to sell well. By the end of January 1884, eight hundred copies of the *Record* and two hundred and eighty copies of the *Album* had been sold, with a New York agent ordering one hundred copies of each title.⁵¹⁶ Yet, Galton’s principal motive was not to make money but to build up a corpus of evidence for his eugenicist theories. As he stated in a letter to *The Times* in 1884:

⁵¹² Galton, *Record of Family Faculties*, p. 1.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.8,10-11.

⁵¹⁵ BL, Macmillan Archive, Add 55218, fol. 3093.

⁵¹⁶ University College London, Galton Papers, 126/1A.

I wish to encourage a habit of preserving family records to enable parents to appreciate the various hereditary influences converging upon their children, and also to obtain material for my own studies in heredity.⁵¹⁷

He offered five hundred pounds as prize money for those who could supply him with complete albums. Despite his advertisements and his assurance that “extracts will be treated as confidential documents, to be used for statistical purposes only,”⁵¹⁸ he received only one hundred and fifty complete responses.⁵¹⁹ Galton, nevertheless, used these as evidence when writing *Natural Inheritance* (1889).⁵²⁰

Galton was not the first to explore notions of hereditary, but up until this point it can be argued that genealogical research had been undertaken as a means of antiquarian edification, glorification, or more practically to gain property rights. Yet in the nineteenth century – an age when the possibility of all aspects of life was perceived to be manageable through progressive expertise – genealogy too began to be seen as tool that could also be harnessed by the expert. This type of genealogy was more a means of discovering and controlling one’s own future health and character through accurate recording practices. As Galton argued:

... the World is beginning to perceive that the life of each individual is in some real sense a prolongation of those of his ancestry. His character, his vigour, and his disease, are principally theirs ... The life histories of our relatives are, therefore, more instructive to us than those of strangers; they are especially able to forewarn and to encourage us, for they are prophetic of our own futures.⁵²¹

It was not only the future of the individual at stake, but rather that of the nation as a whole. As such, information was to a limited extent centralized in order to become a national statistical tool. The results of Galton’s anthropometric laboratories were archived and twenty years later Galton founded the Eugenics Record Office at University College London in 1904. This later became known as the Galton Laboratory of National Eugenics and, under the directorship of Karl Pearson, was combined with the Biometric Laboratory

⁵¹⁷ Francis Galton, 'Family Records', *The Times*, 9 January 1884, p. 10.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ UCL, Galton Papers, 126/26.

⁵²⁰ UCL, Galton Papers, 126/3.

⁵²¹ Francis Galton, 'Photographic chronicles from childhood to age', *Fortnightly Review*, 31 (1882), 26-31, p. 31.

to become the Department of Applied Statistics, the first University department in Britain “committed to advanced teaching and research in statistical theory.”⁵²²

While the Eugenics Record Office was subsumed into an academic research department, the Cambridge University physicist, William Cecil Dampier Whetham and his wife, Catherine expanded upon Galton’s vision of a central eugenicist registry. Arguing for a reinstatement in pride of birth, they envisioned a time “when the innate physical and mental qualities of different families are recorded in a central sociological department or scientifically reformed College of Arms.”⁵²³ Whilst they recognised that the heralds’ visitations “were very deficient, and consisted chiefly of lists of names and places”, they argued that:

... the principle was sound, for it recognized the family and not the individual as the true social unit, and it needed but little development to have given a complete genealogical and sociological register of the upper ranks of the population, thus supplying information of incalculable theoretical and practical value.⁵²⁴

In this way, they hoped:

... for a day in the near future, when ... a comparison of scientific pedigrees will replace, or at all events precede, the discussion of settlements in the preliminaries to a marriage; when birth and good-breeding (in its wide sense), character and ability will be the qualities most prized in the choice of mates; when a bad ancestral strain likely to reappear in succeeding generations will suppress an incipient passion as effectually as it is now cured by a deficiency of education or a superfluity of accent.⁵²⁵

Galton’s anthropometric work was continued by the Eugenics Society. In 1914 the research committee reported that in the past five years it had drawn up a schedule for “the collection of family histories for the Study of Heredity” and had “issued a scheme for the standardization of pedigrees, which has been well received in some foreign countries.”⁵²⁶ In 1931, they published, *How to Prepare a Family Pedigree*. Composed “of durable

⁵²² MacKenzie, *Statistics in Britain 1865-1930: The Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge*, p. 104.

⁵²³ Whetham and Whetham, *The Family and the Nation: A Study in Natural Inheritance and Social Responsibility*, p. 222.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., p.221.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., p.223. The confidential and anonymous matchmaking service, Dor Yeshorim was set up in the 1980s by Rabbi Josef Ekstein in order to prevent incidents recessive diseases, such as Tay-Sachs, amongst the Orthodox Ashkenazi Jewish community in North America. Masha Gessen, *Blood Matters: From Inherited Illness to Designer Babies, How the World and I Found Ourselves in the Future of the Gene* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2008), pp. 166-96.

⁵²⁶ WL, Eugenics Education Society archives, SA/EUG/A.84.

material guaranteed to last a minimum of 100 years,” the schedules declared that they were “not intended to yield scientific data for genetical studies.”⁵²⁷ The society stated that the guide and schedules were “not seeking to compile a scientific record of human genealogies” but were rather aimed “at providing practical instruction as to how to put into effect Sir Francis Galton’s exhortation that everyone should study his own family pedigree.”⁵²⁸ Yet this claim contrasts slightly with the purpose of the schedules printed on the cover of *How to Prepare a Family Pedigree*, which read that they were designed “for medical men or geneticists who are collecting human pedigrees.”⁵²⁹ Both *How to Prepare a Family Pedigree* and the accompanying notes introduced symbols that marked biological and social events which were not part of the traditional visual lexicon of genealogy, such as miscarriages, still-births, deaths in infancy, non-identical/identical twins, and legitimate/illegitimate unions. As such, whilst they were not ostensibly aimed at creating a collection of scientific data, these schedules introduced a new level of anthropological and scientific abstraction into the field of family history.⁵³⁰ In this way, the Eugenics Society extended the visual language of the pedigree and through their numerous tours, lectures, exhibitions and publications may have stimulated a broader interest in family history.

Family history not only became a means of family-planning, but when combined with the technology of photography, it also gave genealogy a pseudo-scientific credibility. In 1888, Kodak launched a new camera, with the slogan, “You press the button, we do the rest.” This design utilized George Eastman’s photographic film and eliminated the need to carry toxic chemicals and plates. In 1901 the market was further extended with the launch of the Kodak Brownie. Families could now represent themselves to each other by recording their relations in novel, scientific and abstract ways. Galton’s albums can be considered as part of this developing market for family photography. Galton himself recognized the hybridity of the development of a new kind of family archivization, writing that:

The family Bibles of past generations served as registers of family events. Births, illnesses, marriages, and deaths were chronicled on their fly-leaves, and those ponderous books fulfilled an important function in this incidental way. But now they are becoming generally replaced by more handy volumes, and the family register is disappearing with the old family Bible. In the meantime photography has been discovered and has sprung into universal use, and the

⁵²⁷ Eugenics Society, 'Explanatory Notes' in accompanying folder and schedules for Eugenics Society, *How to Prepare a Family Pedigree, etc* (London: Eugenics Society, 1931), p. 1.

⁵²⁸ Eugenics Society, 'Pedigree Studies', in *Annual Report 1930-31* (London: Eugenics Society, 1931), p. 7.

⁵²⁹ Front cover, Eugenics Society, *How to Prepare a Family Pedigree, etc.*

⁵³⁰ Mary Bouquet, 'Making Kinship with an Old Reproductive Technology', in *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, ed. by Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon (USA: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 85-115, p. 98.

hereditary value of what are called 'life histories' is becoming continually more appreciated. It seems, then, to be an appropriate time to advocate the establishment of a new form of family register.⁵³¹

The *Record* recommended that the information on "general appearance" should be augmented by a "list of the best extant photographs or portraits of the person at various ages."⁵³² Similarly, the *Album* encouraged parents to include profile and full-face photographic portraits of their children for each five year period. It was emphasized that they should be the same size and executed in a uniform fashion, so that they could be accurately compared.⁵³³ Galton believed that his albums would sell well as Christmas presents because they were "just the sort of thing to talk of at family gatherings."⁵³⁴ Holidays were seen as family times, and were promoted as events to be photographed, epitomized by the advertising slogan "Holidays are Kodak Days."⁵³⁵ As Shawn Michelle Smith writes, "the album came to function as a visual family archive, a record of ancestral legacies – the site where individuals were positioned within family history."⁵³⁶ The giving and receiving of presents at Christmas time was the ideal symbolic space in which registers of the family could be created. In turn, the family photograph album came not only to be an object that was passed on through the generations but also a record of the heirloom – the inherited family characteristics.⁵³⁷ In the *Fortnightly Review*, Galton went so far as to argue that a "life-history" was the closest thing to a "natural birthright":

The child is brought into the world without his having any voice at all in the matter, and the smallest amend that those who introduced him there can make, is to furnish him with that most serviceable of all information to him, the complete life-histories of his near progenitors.⁵³⁸

Eugenics gave genealogy an up-to-date, scientific and utilitarian impetus. In *How to Write the History of a Family* (1887), Phillimore stated that genealogy's:

... pretensions as a science have been shown by Mr. Galton to be based on something more than mere curiosity, for his work on 'Hereditary Genius'

⁵³¹ Galton, 'Photographic chronicles from childhood to age', p. 26.

⁵³² Galton, *Record of Family Faculties*, p. 8.

⁵³³ Galton, *Life History Album*.

⁵³⁴ BL, Macmillan Archive, Add 55218, fol. 3093.

⁵³⁵ Kodak advertisement (1898) reproduced in Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 121.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., p.118.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., p.125.

⁵³⁸ Galton, 'Photographic chronicles from childhood to age', p. 31.

shows that there is such a thing as a true aristocracy of the blood, and that the past history of a family may afford its descendants many a useful lesson.⁵³⁹

Phillimore may have been attracted to the study of heredity principles through his father's work as a doctor and as superintendent of Nottingham General Lunatic Asylum. In his own words, his "object [was] to press forward the scientific aspect of family history," arguing that this aspect "will lend life to the family history and go a long way towards dispelling the common notion that a pedigree is necessarily only a dull collection of names and dates."⁵⁴⁰ Accordingly, his guide included a chapter on portraiture and anthropometry. Directly citing Galton's *Fortnightly Review* article, Phillimore advised his readers that:

In each substantial family we should find a thin quarto volume solidly bound, having leaves of stout paper on which photographs may be mounted. Each pair of opposite pages would be headed by the name of some member of the family. A double row of photographs would run down the centre of each page ... the one containing the medallion of the full face, and the other of the profile. Opposite to each of these the events of the corresponding period would be chronicled. Every opening of the book would contain the photographs and events of about ten periods, five to each page, and would include from ten to twenty years of life history.⁵⁴¹

Phillimore's guide also recommended the adoption of Galton's composite photography. This was produced by combining the portraits of various people, giving each image the same length of exposure for each participant, thereby highlighting common and losing individual features. For Galton, the composite photograph was a kind of visual statistical record, a photographic version of Quetelet's binomial curve. The aesthetic ideal of these composites was based upon the fictional and ideal average, which was dependent upon the blurring of the periphery and the eradication of abnormal features. To most, the composite photograph seems like an idle curiosity rather than an exact science. Indeed, Galton himself candidly confessed "that the persons whose portraits are blended together seldom seem to care much for the result, except as a curiosity."⁵⁴² Yet, for Galton, photography revealed the truth. He saw the full-face and profile photograph as a kind of physiognomical, rational and "outspoken" object akin to architectural delineation: "They correspond to the elevation and side-view of a house, and give hard and accurate physiognomical facts in a patent, outspoken manner."⁵⁴³ Drawing upon the anthropometrical and phrenological beliefs that character was revealed physically in facial

⁵³⁹ Phillimore, *How to write the history of a family: A guide for the genealogist*, p. 1.

⁵⁴⁰ UCL, Galton Papers, 298/3; Ibid., p. v.

⁵⁴¹ Francis Galton cited by Ibid., pp. 67-68.

⁵⁴² Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, p. 13.

⁵⁴³ Galton, 'Photographic chronicles from childhood to age', p. 27.

and cranial features, Galton believed that photography could reveal underlying moral and physical ‘types’. As Phillimore described:

By means of photography the typical family face may be evolved, and in like manner the features peculiar to each individual may be distinguished from other members of the family ... By this means the features peculiar to the individuals are gradually eliminated, and those common to the majority alone remain, thus producing what may be termed the type of the family.⁵⁴⁴

For Phillimore, the identification and archivization of the family resemblance “would undoubtedly be of far greater value than the reproduction of the family coat-of-arms.”⁵⁴⁵

Eugenics not only gave a nationalistic and scientific impetus to the recording of physical features, but also it provided a method of analysis of moral character through biography. Again, in an attempt to counteract the “reproach of dullness”, Phillimore recommended the inclusion of “biographical notices”, which could serve to provide some measure of the “intellectual and moral calibre of a family.”⁵⁴⁶ This too, could be undertaken with scientific and statistical precision:

What is required is a list of facts, every one of which may be separately verified, valued and revalued, and the whole accurately summed. It is the statistics of each man’s conduct in small every-day affairs that will probably be found to give the simplest and most precise measure of his character.⁵⁴⁷

It is difficult to tell to what extent these methods were taken up by the public. To be of use for eugenics, they required central archivization, a long-term commitment, enough money and leisure to document a “substantial family”, and good organizational and technical skills. Nevertheless, *How to Write the History of a Family*, which ran to three editions, became the “standard genealogical textbook” of its time.⁵⁴⁸ Phillimore attributed its success to its anthropometric element, as he explained when writing to Galton:

The first edition was rapidly exhausted and the second will be soon disposed of. This favourable reception to judge from the reviews is principally due to the

⁵⁴⁴ Phillimore, *How to write the history of a family: A guide for the genealogist*, pp. 69-70.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., p.70.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., pp.70-71.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Peter Spufford, 'The Index Library: A Centenary History, 1988', in *The Records of the Nation*, ed. by G. H. Martin and Peter Spufford (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. 119-37, p. 119.

few suggestions I gave about scientific family history the main source of which as you know were to your writings.⁵⁴⁹

Some family histories written in the early twentieth century refer to the scientific application of genealogy. This can be seen in the preface to F.O. Fisher's family history, published in 1910, in which he likens genealogy to "natural history". He writes:

Just as Darwin and others of his school loved to trace the gradual development of the most insignificant of creatures into those of a higher grade ... so the student of family history is content to examine, and to comment upon, the growth of a human plant ... It is, of course, quite impossible to deduce any formulae from the study of one family, whose natural sap, or hereditary temperament, must vary in accordance with mendelian principles; but it may safely be affirmed that, if it were possible to collect and tabulate the characteristics and inter-marriages of a selected number of households, the scientist could ultimately prognosticate with some accuracy the future habits of such of their descendants as retained the environment of their ancestors.⁵⁵⁰

Echoing Katenkamp's statement about the moral lessons to be learnt from genealogy, he concluded that genealogy was not "the vanity that shallow thinkers would have us believe." Rather, family history was the groundwork of a secular science that would enable posterity to master the "weaknesses" of the flesh.⁵⁵¹

In addition, there was possibly less emphasis on primogeniture and the inheritance of property, as heredity increasingly focussed on the biological. This perhaps meant that the ties between aristocratic property and title, and genealogical practice were loosened. It cannot be argued that eugenics was not influenced by class ideology. The married and childless Galton argued against birth control for the middle classes because he believed it would deprive Britain of more intelligent children. Similarly the Whethams, in their vision for a re-instatement of the "aristocratic theory of family", called for a "complete genealogical and sociological register of the upper ranks of the population."⁵⁵²

Nevertheless, the biological viewpoint did encourage the development of consanguine genealogies that were relevant to all lines of a family. As Galton argued:

No countenance is given to the vanity that prompts most family historians to trace their pedigree to some noble ancestor and to pass the rest over in silence.

⁵⁴⁹ UCL, Galton Papers, 298/3.

⁵⁵⁰ Frank O. Fisher, *De Stemmata Piscatoris: A Tale of Sea Toilers. [Being a history of the Fisher family]* (London: Privately printed, 1910), pp. ix-x.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., p.x.

⁵⁵² Whetham and Whetham, *The Family and the Nation: A Study in Natural Inheritance and Social Responsibility*, pp. 221-22.

It demands an equal recognition of all the lines. We should remember the insignificance of any single ancestor in a remote degree.⁵⁵³

It can be argued that there was a slight shift away from pride in a particular lineage to an interest in all the lines of ancestry and the social and environmental conditions that may have shaped them. To a limited extent this also gave the uterine line more standing. In a system that privileged the inheritance of the male namesake, eugenics opened up interest in compiling ascendant pedigrees because mothers as well as fathers were seen to contribute to descendants. As Lucas argued in 1909:

It is only of recent years that the wide-spread interest that now obtains has been taken in the question of heredity, the all-powerful influence that passes through male and female lines equally.⁵⁵⁴

Similarly, in an article entitled, 'Hereditary Tendencies in Female Descents' Bernau advised his genealogist readers that "that hereditary tendencies may be successfully sought in mother-to-daughter descents."⁵⁵⁵ In this way, the opening up of genealogical interests to the matrilineal lineage and the desire "to clothe the skeleton pedigree-table with flesh, and make of it a living witness for cross-examination by the students of heredity" can be seen in the early years of the twentieth century.⁵⁵⁶

Of perhaps most significance, however, was an increased interest in national character. In the mid-1920s, the eugenicist, Henry A. Mess wrote that individuals "can sometimes learn quite a deal about themselves and their make-up by studying their family histories", but arguably it was the application of such knowledge to groups and nations that was the focus of eugenics: "we are beginning to know something about the psychology of different races; it may help us later on to understand the psychology of different nations."⁵⁵⁷ This interest in national character was intertwined with an interest in national ancestry. National identity for some was a matter of race and was believed to be present in physical appearance and comportment. In his guidebooks, Phillimore recommended the work of the anthropologist, John Beddoe: *The Races of Britain: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe*

⁵⁵³ Galton, *Record of Family Faculties*, p. 1.

⁵⁵⁴ Lucas, 'Seize Quarters and Ascending Pedigrees', p. 36.

⁵⁵⁵ Bernau, 'Hereditary Tendencies in Female Descents', p. 52.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.50.

⁵⁵⁷ Henry A. Mess, *The Power of Heredity, Eugenic Alliance Leaflets: No.3* (London: Eugenics Society, c.1925), p. 8.

(1885).⁵⁵⁸ Beddoe travelled the country, intent on recording the physical features or “nigrescence” of the various localities of the nation. He stated that:

The ever-increasing rapidity of local migration and intermixture, due to the extension of railways and the altered conditions of society, will in the next generation almost inextricably confuse the limits and proportions of the British races; and it is a source of satisfaction to me that I have laboured to seize on fleeting opportunities, and to observe and record phenomena, which, however trivial they may appear from some points of view, may for generations to come retain some biological and historical value.⁵⁵⁹

Treating mankind as a kind of topographical natural feature, Beddoe sought to map the phenomena of the biological and historical before the effects of modernity – migration, urbanisation and the railways – had disrupted the landscape.⁵⁶⁰

Genealogical and antiquarian interests can be viewed in the light of an increasing belief in shared national ancestry and heritage. Ernest Renan in his 1882 lecture, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, believed that the nation was “a soul, a spiritual principle” held together through the past, the common possession “of a rich legacy of remembrances”, and a present consent and desire to live together and to value “the heritage which all hold in common.”⁵⁶¹ He went on to argue that the “worship of ancestors is understandably justifiable, since our ancestors have made us who we are. A heroic past, of great men, of glory...is the social principle upon which the national idea rests.”⁵⁶² In this way, the need to collect and record one’s own ancestry and Beddoe’s mapping of physical characteristics can be seen as part of larger group of conservation activities which were embedded in strong sense of national heritage and identity, such as the collecting of English folk music and the preservation of English architecture and landscape.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁸ Phillimore, *How to write the history of a family: A guide for the genealogist*, p. 72; Phillimore, *The Family Historian: A Short Initial Guide for Writing, Printing and Illustrating the History of a Family*.

⁵⁵⁹ 'Preface', John Beddoe, *The Races of Britain: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, Trübner, 1885).

⁵⁶⁰ Bryan Sykes describes Beddoe’s *The Races of Britain* as “a masterpiece of observation,” arguing that work is “best judged as a masterly piece of natural history,” Bryan Sykes, *Blood of the Isles: Exploring the Genetic Roots of Our Tribal History* (London: Bantam, 2006), p. 71.

⁵⁶¹ Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 17-18, p. 17.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ In what has become known as the First Folk Revival the composer, Ralph Vaughn Williams was a leading collector of English folktunes alongside Cecil Sharp and Lucy Broadwood. He was also a descendent of the Wedgwood and Darwin families. Williams’ mother, Margaret Wedgwood (1842–1937), was the daughter of Josiah Wedgwood, grandson of the potter, and Caroline Darwin, sister of Charles Darwin.

With the rise of the nation-state and democracy, the old ties of feudal kinship and loyalty to the monarchy or church were challenged and in some cases, broken. Nevertheless, family and kinship remained potent social and biological metaphors within the rhetoric of national ancestry. The idea of the nation is complex and evokes notions of shared biological and cultural heritage. Deriving from the Latin verb, *nasci*, to be born, the term ‘nation’ was originally associated with blood ties and notions of breed or race.⁵⁶⁴ Civil registration can not only be seen as national project but also, through the practices of nomenclature and the granting of citizenship, as a symbolic function of patriarchal kinship. Katia Malaussena, drawing on the writings of Pierre Legendre and anthropologist Gilbert Durand, writes about the parental function of the nation state in Western society – individuals have a “double birth”, who before being born to parents are ‘born’ to the nation.⁵⁶⁵ As such, genealogy can be seen not only as a way of forming a sense of familial belonging but also national belonging as well.

Yet the idea of national ancestry frustrates the notion of a homogenous British genealogy. Beddoe, for example, sought indications of various ‘racial’ types and Galton sorted people according to their “Scotch, Irish, Welsh, Saxon, Danish or Norman” ancestral elements.⁵⁶⁶ In turn, genealogical practice in Britain was influenced by its diaspora, who were perhaps not so much interested in tracing their British ancestry, as their English, Welsh, Scottish, or Celtic, Anglo-Saxon or Teutonic ancestry. The main diasporan influence upon British genealogy was – and is – American. Arguably, American national identity was not built on the idea of endogamous ancestry but rather upon its status as a “melting-pot”, and as a “nation of immigrants.”⁵⁶⁷ Nevertheless, genealogy was a popular hobby in late nineteenth and early-twentieth-century America and this popularity has continued to shape genealogical practice within Britain. It is to a discussion of this influence that we shall now turn.

⁵⁶⁴ Walker Conner, 'A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a ...', in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 36-46, p. 38.

⁵⁶⁵ Pierre Legendre writes, 'In the Western experience of symbolic order, there is a genealogically efficient State when the State vouches for the principle of life by guaranteeing a civil law of filiation that conforms to the demands of the subject's genealogical justice.' *Les enfants du text*, p.17 cited by Katia Malaussena, 'The Birth of Modern Commemoration in France: The Tree and the Text', *French History*, 18:2 (2004), 154-72, p. 155.

⁵⁶⁶ Galton, *Record of Family Faculties*, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁶⁷ Conner, 'A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a ...', p. 38.

Diasporan Genealogy

British genealogy can be seen as heir to colonial expansion and the colonization of new territory. In particular, the seventeenth-century migrations from England to America and later migrations of English, Scots and Irish to the Americas are groups that have epitomized this longing for roots and for a lost home, whether literally or figuratively. From 1846 to 1865 approximately seventy per cent of Europeans emigrating to the Americas and Australia were British. Between 1860 and 1913 “an annual average of 125,000 British took passage to an extra-European country. In 1887 alone (a peak year), 202, 000 went to the USA.”⁵⁶⁸ The cultural implications of these migrations are significant. On the one hand, the diasporan nature of American nationality can be seen as a contributing factor to the global appeal of American cultural products, including genealogical products.⁵⁶⁹ On the other hand, the diasporan longing for a lost home is perhaps one of the most powerful motivations for genealogical research, a motivation that in turn has its own specific historical migratory roots. As the anthropologist, Alan Macfarlane reflects:

... we wish to understand ourselves in time; we recognise that much of what we now are is explained by the past and that even the differences make it possible to hold up a mirror to ourselves. Since much of American culture stemmed from the Anglo-Saxon migration in the seventeenth century, this quest for ‘roots’ is common to much of the world. This is all the more so since the effects of first the English and later American imperialism have spread throughout much of the globe.⁵⁷⁰

In 1887 Phillimore predicted that:

The day is probably not far distant when the younger English colonies in America, Africa, and Australasia will display that same anxiety to know something of their past family history and to connect their lineage with the old country, which is so characteristic of the elder English settlements now known

⁵⁶⁸ Donald Sassoon, *The Culture of the Europeans: From 1800 to the Present* (London: HarperPress, 2006), pp. 4-5.

⁵⁶⁹ Donald Sassoon argues that one of the reasons that American culture is so influential today is because of the nature of its hybrid identity at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when technical innovations such as the gramophone, cinema and radio were developed. Because America was made up of diasporan Irish, Poles, Jews, Afro-American etc., cultural artefacts had to appeal to all these cultures or to a mythic kind of American ‘everyman’, because of this (in addition to the position of the immigrant being more heightened to a sense of ‘normality’ because they perceived themselves as not being normal or atypical), American culture has had a strong global appeal. It is its very diasporan nature or cultural hybridity, that coincided with a crucial time of advance in technological communications media, which gives American cultural products global appeal. Arguably, at the heart of this diasporan culture is the idea of home and nostalgia – a longing for a lost home. *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

⁵⁷⁰ Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property and Social Transition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), p. 7.

as the United States. And perhaps it is not too much to anticipate that an extended knowledge of their common descent will tend to lessen local rivalries and to knit more firmly together in one common union all the Anglo-Saxon settlements throughout the world.⁵⁷¹

Fourteen years later in 1901 Round wrote that it “is evident that, both in England and America, there is an increasing interest in genealogical research, and, with the rapid growth of the published materials available, it is likely to increase further.”⁵⁷²

During the 1790s George Washington corresponded with the herald Sir Isaac Heard about his ancestry and Wagner describes such activity as “typical.”⁵⁷³ Yet initially – especially for the first generations of the newly independent America – genealogy was viewed as antagonistic to the ideals of republicanism and to trace one’s ancestry to before 1776 was seen as unpatriotic. Even though Thomas Jefferson had tried to obtain an English coat of arms in 1771, he opposed the Society of Cincinnati – a hereditary organization set up by officers of the Continental Army in 1783 – on the principle that American organizations should be built upon “the natural equality of man, the denial of every pre-eminence but that annexed to legal office, & particularly the denial of pre-eminence by birth.”⁵⁷⁴ Yet, despite the American notion of the New World ‘free’ from the shackles of the old and its self-image as “a new, future-orientated society of self-made people”, genealogy became a popular American pastime.⁵⁷⁵ The historian, Stubbs, himself pointed out the contradiction:

It is strange that while the study of genealogy used to be thought the sign of an obsolete, effete, and worn-out nation, at the present time in America the study of genealogy is drawing a larger expenditure of money, investigation, and literary power than in any other country in the world.⁵⁷⁶

Indeed, American’s ambivalence about ancestry did not preclude the growth of genealogical interest. A specific turning point can be seen in Daniel Webster’s oration at Plymouth, given to celebrate the bicentennial of the Pilgrims’ landing on 11 December 1820. In his speech, Webster argued that, while there was “a regard for ancestry, which nourishes only a weak pride”, there was more importantly “a moral and philosophical

⁵⁷¹ Phillimore, *How to write the history of a family: A guide for the genealogist*, pp. 193-94.

⁵⁷² Round, *Studies in Peerage and Family History*, p. ix.

⁵⁷³ Wagner, *Heralds of England: A History of the Office and College of Arms*, p. 546.

⁵⁷⁴ Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, 16 April 1784, cited by François Weil, 'John Farmer and the Making of American Genealogy', *The New England Quarterly*, LXXX:3 (2007), 408-34, p. 411.

⁵⁷⁵ Stille, *The Future of the Past: How the Information Age Threatens to Destroy our Cultural Heritage*, p. 311.

⁵⁷⁶ William Stubbs, *Proceedings of the Cheshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. XV., p.32 cited by Phillimore, *How to write the history of a family: A guide for the genealogist*, p. 188.

respect for our ancestors, which elevates the character and improves the heart.”⁵⁷⁷ This attitude was further developed throughout the decade. Described as the “Father of American Genealogy”, John Farmer (1789-1838), was at the centre of a new group of antiquarians who promoted genealogical researches and the care of archival sources. His efforts in genealogy were crowned in 1829 with the publication of *A Genealogical Register of the First Settlers of New England*. This work, which represented many years of research and at least four years of correspondence, was the first published work to extend genealogy beyond a single person or family, and it set a new standard by insisting upon primary evidence as a “critical supplement to and corrective of family lore.”⁵⁷⁸ It was followed by James Savage’s (1784-1873) *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England*, a standard work which appeared in four volumes between 1860 and 1862.

Americans were ahead of the British in organizing a society that was dedicated specifically to genealogy. When the notion of setting up a genealogical society was brought up in conversation amongst some antiquarians in New England in the 1840s, the initial reaction was one of incredulity as those “to whom the subject was proposed, intimated that they did not wish to be considered insane, while some others laughed at the idea.”⁵⁷⁹ Nevertheless, by 1844 the New England Historic-Genealogical Society (NEHGS) was successfully founded by a small group of individual genealogists interested in “some organization for the purpose of making Heraldic and kindred collections.”⁵⁸⁰ This group included Samuel G. Drake, J. W. Thornton, Charles Ewer, Lemuel Shattuck and the Boston merchant, William H. Montague, who was prompted to become involved by the discovery that the janitor of the Boston Custom House was about to stoke its boiler with 1798 US District Tax rolls.⁵⁸¹ From 1883 onwards, the NEHGS’ Committee on English Records employed Henry Fitz-Gilbert Waters (1833-1913) to live in London and undertake research on their behalf. His findings, chiefly based on research into the wills at Somerset House, were published by the society in over sixty articles written over seventeen years under the title, “Genealogical Gleanings in England”. English genealogists also became members of American historical societies. In 1844 Grimaldi was elected an honorary member of the

⁵⁷⁷ Daniel Webster, ‘First Settlement of New England’, cited by Weil, ‘John Farmer and the Making of American Genealogy’, p. 416.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 418,25.

⁵⁷⁹ Samuel G. Drake, ‘Origin of the New England Historic-Genealogical Society’, *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, IX (1855), 9-12, p. 10.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p.9.

⁵⁸¹ James B. Allen and others, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of Utah 1894 -1994* (Utah: Brigham Young University, 1995), p. 24.

Georgia Historical Society.⁵⁸² In 1893, ten per cent of subscribers to the Harleian Society were American and the society had honorary local secretaries in Washington and Connecticut.⁵⁸³ America was also the first to successfully inaugurate a national genealogical society. By 1903 a National Genealogical Society was founded to deal with genealogical enquiries, to keep a record of families being researched and to co-ordinate a network of research. By 1912 it was publishing *The National Genealogical Society Quarterly*.

The first person to receive academic recognition for their genealogical work was not British but American. Colonel Joseph Lemuel Chester (1821-82), settled in England in 1862 and spent twenty years researching the origins of American clients' ancestors. A significant antiquarian, he was one of the founders of the Harleian Society (1869) and, in addition to the publication of the *Westminster Abbey Registers*, produced twenty-four volumes of pedigree collections.⁵⁸⁴ When, in his own words, he was "constantly prowling among Parish Registers and other documents" he often kept an eye out for information that would help other antiquarians, such as the Shakespearian scholar, J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, as Chester explained to him: "I have received so many kindnesses from the literary men of this country that I am only too happy to reciprocate whenever in my power."⁵⁸⁵ On 22 June 1881 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law from Oxford University at the annual Encaenia ceremony. In a letter to Francis Joseph Baigent he wrote:

I value the Oxford dignity conferred in me because it was the distinct recognition, for the first time I believe, by either University for the branch of study to which I have devoted myself.⁵⁸⁶

Oxford University was particularly indebted to Chester's work in transcribing all the matriculation entries in its registers from 1574 to 1869, which was completed after his death by Joseph Foster in the publication, *Alumni Oxonienses*.

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, Americans featured as the largest group of overseas users of public records. One of the earliest 'professional' American genealogists was Horatio Gates Somerby (1805-1872), who visited the PRO "fourteen times in 1852,

⁵⁸² BL, Correspondence of Stacey Grimaldi, Add. 34189 fol.271.

⁵⁸³ Harleian Society., 'Report for the Year 1893', in *Familiae Minorum Gentium*, ed. by John W. Clay (London: Wardour Press, 1894).

⁵⁸⁴ Wagner, *English Genealogy*, pp. 354-56.

⁵⁸⁵ Edinburgh University Library, J.O. Halliwell-Phillipps Correspondence 1866-81,162/38.

⁵⁸⁶ BL, Baigent Collection, Vol. XXVII. Add. 39985 fol.112.

consulting 234 subsidy rolls, a recusant roll and eight inquisitions in the course of his research into the genealogical history of New England.”⁵⁸⁷ In 1852 the PRO became worried that some literary searchers were making a profit from their work.⁵⁸⁸ Somerby, who was known to do work on behalf of clients, was one of them.⁵⁸⁹ Assistant keeper, Joseph Hunter (1783-1861) was concerned “that in some of his cases there may be expectations of profit on the part of the Persons for whom he acts, some people in America entertaining it is well known extravagant notions of obstructed rights to Property and even hereditary honours in England.”⁵⁹⁰ In response and acknowledging that the “Citizens of the United States of respectability are generally anxious to obtain information respecting their ancestors when any opportunity offers”, head keeper, Sir Francis Palgrave (1788-1861) dismissed Hunter’s concerns arguing that:

The general genealogical History of New England must include the Genealogies of particular Families, and if any of their representatives choose to concur in the expense of a work equally interesting to themselves as individuals as the Old Country, it is a reason, rather than an objection, for our granting them all facilities.⁵⁹¹

Considering that “being aliens they could not inherit or succeed to either lands or Honours”, Palgrave thought there would be no harm in giving Americans free access.⁵⁹² Nevertheless, clients were willing to pay for documentary proof of English ancestry and when he failed to find a connection, Somerby simply concocted wills and ‘misread’ items in order to keep his clients happy.⁵⁹³ While this lack of professionalism was not known at the time it has since been exposed, thereby proving that Hunter’s instincts in this case were correct.

⁵⁸⁷ Michael Roper, 'The International role of the Public Record Office', in *The Records of the Nation*, ed. by G.H. Martin and Peter Spufford (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), pp. 9-22, p. 9.

⁵⁸⁸ John D. Cantwell, *The Public Record Office, 1838-1958* (London: H.M.S.O., 1991), p. 272; Margaret Procter, 'Consolidation and separation: British archives and American historians at the turn of the twentieth century', *Archival Science*, 6 (2007), 361-79, p. 365.

⁵⁸⁹ For example, one client was Allyn S. Kellogg, for whom Somerby, “the well-known and successful investigator of the English genealogies of American families” obtained extracts relating to the White family from the parish registers of Chelmsford. Allyn Stanley Kellogg, *Memorials of Elder John White, one of the first settlers of Hartford, Conn., and of his descendants* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood, 1860), p. 279.

⁵⁹⁰ TNA, Domestic Records of the Public Record Office, PRO 35/1.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Paul C. Reed, 'Two Somerby Frauds Or "Placing the Flesh on the Wrong Bones"', *The American Genealogist*, 74:1 (1999), 15-30.

Not only specific individuals, but also American organizations encouraged genealogy. A 1947 article from *Collier's* argued that "Next to the Chinese, who practice it as a religion, Americans are the leading ancestor-worshippers in the world."⁵⁹⁴ Of most significance in this respect is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), for whom genealogy is seen as a holy act. The church's genealogical activities are principally driven by its belief in proxy baptism. The LDS' American founder, Joseph Smith first preached the doctrine of the baptism of the dead at a funeral in 1840, the justification of which he took from a passage of St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead?"⁵⁹⁵ Mormons believe that the dead who did not accept or hear the gospel will be given a second opportunity to be baptised and thereby accepted into the Mormon faith. They can either accept or reject this posthumous opportunity which is achieved by proxy through a living believer. Baptisms are not the only saving ordinances that can be performed for the dead. Mormons believe that the family and its relationships exist eternally in paradise. Inspired by the last verses in the Old Testament, believers are impelled by the 'Spirit of Elijah' to 'seal' the hearts "of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers."⁵⁹⁶ Confirmation, ordination to the male-only priesthoods of Aaron and Melchizedek, endowment, marriage and 'sealings' to spouses and parents are the other saving ordinances that can be performed on behalf of one's ancestors. In particular, the sealing of different generations requires a vast store of genealogical information on who is related to whom. As such, the LDS temples are reliant upon the genealogical work of the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU), which supplies the temples with names for its vicarious ordinances.

The connections between the LDS and British genealogical practice are intimate. Even before the establishment of the GSU in 1894, it was common for missionaries to undertake genealogical research as part of their work. Wilfred Woodruff, for example, spent some of his missionary time in London during 1840 and 1846 undertaking genealogical research before he rose to become President of the Church in 1889 – demonstrating that for some church members the notion of posthumous baptism caught on very quickly.⁵⁹⁷ Scottish members in particular appear to have played an important part in the events leading to the foundation of the GSU. An 1879 notice in *The Deseret News* called for a meeting of all

⁵⁹⁴ Cited by Null, 'Genealogy and Family History in the Academic Library', p. 29.

⁵⁹⁵ 1 Corinthians 15.29.

⁵⁹⁶ Malachi 4.5-6.

⁵⁹⁷ Allen and others, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of Utah 1894 - 1994*, pp. 34-36.

saints of Scottish descent to join together to promote research into their ancestry.⁵⁹⁸ In 1888, David MacKenzie of Salt Lake City and Alexander F. MacDonald of St George founded the Latter-Day Saints' Genealogical Bureau. This was headed by John Nicholson and Douglas A. Swan, and initially emphasized Scottish research.⁵⁹⁹ The geographical focus of the GSU's research reflected the migratory patterns of the members of the LDS and agents were sent to the eastern US, Germany and Switzerland; George Carpenter was sent to London and William Leggat to Edinburgh.⁶⁰⁰ Between 1885 and 1900 one hundred and seventy-eight missionaries were commissioned to do genealogical work on behalf of the church, ninety, or approximately fifty per cent, of whom were sent to Great Britain. By comparison only two were sent to the European Continent.⁶⁰¹

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, American genealogical interest was fostered by an increasing number of hereditary organizations. Many of these centred upon the birth of the American nation and their aim was to provide a genealogical link with national events. In the 1890s several organizations were founded which emphasised and celebrated the inheritance of white 'American' bloodlines. These included the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America (1891), the National Society of New England Women (1895), the Hereditary Order of Descendants of Colonial Governors (1896) and the Society of Mayflower Descendants (1897). One of the most predominant was the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), which came into being on 11 October 1890 when the Sons of the American Revolution voted to bar women from their society. By 1895, the DAR had reached a membership of ten thousand and three hundred women.⁶⁰² Proof of ancestry was required in order to join and this necessitated genealogical research. In 1937, the American genealogist, Gilbert Harry Doane commented that:

... more digging for ancestors has probably resulted from the desire to belong to [DAR] than has come about through any other impetus ... This society ... is directly responsible for much of the widespread interest in the preservation of

⁵⁹⁸ 'Family Genealogies', *The Deseret News*, XXVIII:23 (9 July 1879), 8, <<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?desnews3,2230180>> [accessed 21 December 2009].

⁵⁹⁹ 'A Genealogical Bureau: An Organization of Great Benefit to Scottish Saints', *The Utah Enquirer*, 12:76 (25 September 1888), 1, <<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/DE1&CISOPTR=6990&CISOSHOW=6999>> [accessed 2 May 2009]; Allen and others, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of Utah 1894-1994*, pp. 37-38.

⁶⁰⁰ 'Genealogical Society', *The Deseret Weekly* (25 June 1898), 8, <<http://udn.lib.utah.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/deseretnews5&CISOPTR=23565&CISOSHOW=23615>> [accessed 2 May 2009].

⁶⁰¹ Allen and others, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of Utah 1894-1994*, p. 40.

⁶⁰² Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture*, p. 136.

records of genealogical value. More than 200,000 lineages have been filed and preserved in the D.A.R. archives in Memorial Continental Hall in Washington, showing the descent of the members of the society from one or more soldiers who served in the Revolutionary War between 1775 and 1783 ... Each year hundreds of additional pedigrees are submitted, approved, and placed on file.⁶⁰³

No doubt belonging to DAR and being part of a society that identified itself as the descendants of those who fought and contributed to the perceived foundation of the USA, provided a sense of common kinship and a patriotic identity, as well as a form of social capital. This patriotic kinship was achieved through the technology of the archive, through authentication and consignation. In this way, the archive of the DAR has created and legitimised a particular kind of patriotic genealogical kinship.

Societies were not the only factor in the development of American genealogy and national identity. The majority of commercial organizations that were the first to enter the field of genealogy were publishing houses, such as Goodspeed. Some specialized in genealogical printing and when they did not get enough family histories to publish for compilers of such works they sought to stimulate business by publishing on their own account. One of the earliest was the publishing company, Joel Munsell's Sons of Albany, New York. By 1900 Munsell's *Index to American Genealogies* had run through five editions. They established a reputation publishing a series of books, entitled *American Ancestry*, in which people were invited to contribute their own family lines for inclusion.⁶⁰⁴ Like the DAR, this was based on an exclusive and highly Euro-centric notion of American nationality. As the guidelines for inclusion reminded the reader:

... when it is remembered that there was only a population of less than two millions and a quarter in the whole of the United States in the year 1776 (exclusive of slaves and Indians), it will be seen that but a small proportion of the present population can claim the honor of being descended from the original American stock; and consequently in ages to come, the arrival of the Virginian colonists, the emigration of the Puritan and Dutch settlers, as well as the settlement of the Quaker and Huguenot refugees will form as memorable epochs in the history of the GREAT REPUBLIC as the Saxon and Norman conquests of GREAT BRITAIN now do in the history of that country. A few centuries hence Americans will experience as much pleasure in tracing back their ancestry to those periods as the English now do to the days of William the Conqueror.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰³ Gilbert Harry Doane, *Searching for Your Ancestors: The Why and How of Genealogy* (New York: MacGraw-Hill, 1937), pp. 158-59.

⁶⁰⁴ Jacobus, *Genealogy as Pastime and Profession*, p. 51.

⁶⁰⁵ Thomas P. Hughes, *American Ancestry*. 12 vols. Vol. 1 (Albany: J. Munsell's Sons, 1887), p. iv.

From such a pioneering heroic narrative, that of the “slaves and Indians” is excluded to parenthesis. In this way, conquest and colonialism is seen as the founding event of national identity. This model of the foundation of American stock is in turn based on those strands of English historiography which celebrated and took pride in the Saxon and Norman conquests.

A noticeable American trend is the organization of family associations and reunions. In 1887 Phillimore noted that:

It is not uncommon in America to organize a family gathering or reunion on quite an extensive scale of the descendants of the emigrant ancestor. Such an assembly usually ends in forming an association for the purpose of collecting for publication all historical matter relating to the family. Some of the best genealogies and family histories in the United States have originated in this manner. Such a custom ... cannot but engender kindly feelings of kinship amongst those who, though related, would otherwise remain strangers to one another.⁶⁰⁶

Described as a “mini social movement”, the formation of family associations in the 1870s and 80s and subsequent family reunions took part mainly among New England Protestants, who may have been prompted not only by general socio-political and demographic changes but also by the centennial of 1876 and the Civil War.⁶⁰⁷ Marilyn Strathern argues “that twentieth-century Euro-Americans who pursue their personal genealogies to find some originating location for their family” and especially family gatherings, are modern in that they are enabled by “telecommunications, high-speed transport, and commercial services that specialize in tracing family histories.” She writes:

Such gatherings acknowledge what people take to be modern conditions of living – they expect to be geographically scattered through migration, occupation, or lifestyle. There is nothing traditional about getting everyone together *for such reasons*, though the endeavour echoes tradition (family gatherings at festivals or life crises) and in gathering those who are related through common ancestors the endeavor appears to be activating links that belong to the past.⁶⁰⁸

However, it can be argued that there is such an American ‘tradition’, or, that this ‘modern’ development began earlier. Camilla Donnell and Emma A. Donnell describe how in the

⁶⁰⁶ Phillimore, *How to write the history of a family: A guide for the genealogist*, pp. 191-92; Wagner, *English Genealogy*, p. 358.

⁶⁰⁷ Robert M. Taylor, 'Summoning the Wandering Tribes: Genealogy and Family Reunions in American History', *Journal of Social History*, 16:2 (1982), 21 - 37.

⁶⁰⁸ Marilyn Strathern, 'Nostalgia and the New Genetics', in *Rhetorics of Self-Making*, ed. by Debora Battaglia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 97-120, pp. 100-01.

1880s “members of the Donnell family began to hold neighbourhood picnics, which grew from small affairs to increasing proportions, including all who cared to attend, friends as well as relatives.” Following on from this, the first formal reunion was “held at the Kingston church in 1893, by the Donnell and Hamilton families, to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of their coming to the State.”⁶⁰⁹ By 1909, the Donnell reunion was attended by two hundred descendants from other counties and states. The family history, authored by the Donnells, was written specifically to be distributed at the next reunion in 1912. A feeling of ‘modern’ alienation, migration and rootlessness and the reunions, family histories and commemorations that such feelings engender, may not, therefore, be unique to the post Second World War era.⁶¹⁰

Another development that may have been influenced by American practice was a greater emphasis on biographical detail and storytelling. Phillimore noticed that the narrative form of pedigree was more popular in America as opposed to graphic and tabular forms. He went on to observe that the “independent family memoir ... is a product almost exclusively of modern growth and ... it is [in] the United States that they are most numerous.”⁶¹¹ Certainly, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, more independent family narratives were being published in Britain towards the end of the nineteenth century. While genealogy was given a bad name through high profile cases – such as the Shipway pedigree fraud – and while the work of genealogists, such as Somerby, have since been proven to be unreliable, thereby undermining genealogy’s status as a branch of historical study, there is still something in the desire for genealogical biography and storytelling that remains to be examined. Rather than viewing genealogy as a lesser and flawed branch of history, the next chapter investigates it primarily as a form of semi-autobiographical narrative. It is to an examination of this, the role of archives, and the inter-play of nationalism in the formation of such identification narratives, that we shall now turn.

⁶⁰⁹ Camilla Donnell and Emma A. Donnell, *The Donnell Family: A History and Genealogy of the Descendants of Thomas Donnell of Scotland* (Indiana: William Mitchell, 1912), p. 155.

⁶¹⁰ This very tradition of homecoming may even have particular Scottish Protestant roots. Gwen Kennedy Neville, *Kinship and Pilgrimage: Rituals of Reunion in American Protestant Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁶¹¹ Phillimore, *How to write the history of a family: A guide for the genealogist*, p. 5.

Chapter Three: Narrating the Genealogical Life

There is an assumption that genealogy tells us something about ourselves and that it is intertwined with personal identity. But is such an assumption valid? In 1986, the psychologist Roy F. Baumeister wrote that the “‘roots’ obsession” of the 1970s was “a misguided attempt to gain self-knowledge by reviving an obsolete feature of identity.” He argued that genealogy’s attraction lay in its offer of a clear-cut methodology. However, because “it makes very little difference who your great-grandfather was”, Baumeister pronounced that this “fad” had “died an early death.”⁶¹² However, this “fad” did not die an early death. Instead, it has grown in popularity despite its supposed obsolescence. On one level, genealogy offers an implausible and unachievable “promise of vivid self-knowledge gained by library work.”⁶¹³ On another level, the search for roots goes beyond library work. In this respect, genealogy has perhaps become something other than a “matter of definite questions with definite answers.”⁶¹⁴

For some, the pursuit of family history fulfils a psychological need to the extent that it becomes a way of orientating the internal as well as the external worlds. Often genealogists argue that there is “an innate need to establish ancestral roots [which] arises as a psychological hunger.”⁶¹⁵ In the field of psychoanalysis, the term, ‘genealogical bewilderment’ has come to stand for a “group of psychological problems stemming from lack of knowledge of one’s ancestors.”⁶¹⁶ John Triseliotis, who has studied fostered and adopted children, is convinced that “at least in Western Cultures, [people] have a deep emotional and social need and curiosity to know about their families of origin and ancestors.”⁶¹⁷ He argues that narrative about the self contributes to a sense of continuity and uniqueness which is vital “to help us complete ourselves or complete the pattern of our lives” and is, therefore, a “necessary ingredient to the building of self and personality.”⁶¹⁸ In a similar fashion, Stephen Sayers argues that genealogy is a form of contemporary legend that accords with Freud’s description of legend as a “product of history attended to

⁶¹² Roy F. Baumeister, *Identity: Cultural Change and the Struggle for Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 110.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁵ Humphery-Smith, 'The Teaching of Genealogy', p. 130.

⁶¹⁶ James E. Storm, 'British Journal of Medical Psychology. LIX, 1986: A Fresh Look at Genealogical Bewilderment', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 57 (1988), 288, <<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=paq.057.0288a>> [accessed 2 April 2008].

⁶¹⁷ John Triseliotis, 'Identity and Genealogy', *The Scottish Genealogist* (1987), 272-76, p. 273.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*

by desire.”⁶¹⁹ The choices that a genealogist makes and the information that is pursued and ignored, remembered or forgotten, in the course of their genealogical research, is partly “a function of the social and psychological characteristics of the researcher as it is of that which has been researched.”⁶²⁰ As such it offers practitioners some degree of unconscious gratification that finds form in the construction of narrative.

Narratives often have a proclivity for genealogical themes. Because inheritance and primogeniture are “charged with a high conflict potential” they are a recurring feature of many nineteenth-century novels.⁶²¹ Even though the middle-classes were not affected by primogeniture in particular, such novels were increasingly consumed by a growing middle-class readership. The author, Thomas Hardy, who came from the rising middle-class, used genealogical material as a source for his writing and he regularly used multi-generational structures for his plots. As the nineteenth century developed, genealogical themes not only centred upon the inheritance of property, but also upon biological heredity, and Hardy himself was interested in notions of eugenics and degeneration.⁶²² Claiming that genealogical “study is the study of life itself”, the genealogist, George Sherwood cited Hardy in his introduction to *The Pedigree Register* (1907):

The pedigrees of our county families, arranged in diagrams on the pages of county histories, mostly appear at first sight to be as barren of any touch of nature as a table of logarithms. But given a clue - the faintest tradition of what went on behind the scenes, and this dryness of dust may be transformed into a palpitating drama. More, the careful comparison of dates alone - that of birth with marriage, of marriage with death, of one marriage, birth or death with a kindred marriage, birth or death - will often effect the same transformation, and anybody practiced in raising images from such genealogies finds himself unconsciously filling into the framework the motives, passions, and personal qualities which would appear to be the single explanation possible of some

⁶¹⁹ Stephen Sayers, 'The Psychological Significance of Genealogy', in *Perspectives on Contemporary Legend*, ed. by Gillian Bennett, Paul S. Smith, and J. D. A. Widdowson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), pp. 49-168, pp. 158-61.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.149-68.

⁶²¹ Ulrike Vedder, 'Continuity and Death: Literature and the Law of Succession in the Nineteenth Century', in *Heredity Produced: At the Crossroads of Biology, Politics, and Culture, 1500-1870*, ed. by Staffan Müller-Wille and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), pp. 85-101, p. 87.

⁶²² Sophie Gilmartin, *Ancestry and Narrative in Nineteenth-century British Literature: Blood Relations from Edgeworth to Hardy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Sophie Gilmartin, 'Geology, Genealogy and Church Restoration in Hardy's Writing', in *The achievement of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 22-40; O'Toole, *Genealogy and Fiction in Hardy: Family Lineage and Narrative Lines*; Angelique Richardson, 'Some Science underlies all Art': The Dramatization of Sexual Selection and Racial Biology in Thomas Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and the *Well-Beloved*, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 3:2 (1998), 302-38.

extraordinary conjunction in times, events, and personages that occasionally marks these reticent family records.⁶²³

From the examination and compilation of “conjunction in times, events, and personages” life stories are formed. In this way, it can be argued that “part of the inspiration for the gathering of vital statistics and ‘facts’ by genealogists can actually be found in a narrative mode of thought...a narrative impulse lies at the heart of the genealogical enterprise itself.”⁶²⁴

Hardy not only used genealogical records as an imaginative source from which he transformed their “dryness of dust” into a “palpitating drama”, but was also interested in his own family history. He compiled his pedigree in the later years of his life when writing his memoirs. His pedigree chart pays scant attention to his close relatives, including his humbly-positioned first cousins and uncles and aunts. Instead it features a distant branch of Hardy’s mother’s family, the Childs, who, as are recorded on the pedigree, include members of the learned professions – surgeons, a solicitor and an Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.⁶²⁵ The remote genealogy of the “le Hardys of Jersey” is also delineated in the upper right hand corner and a parallel can be made between the diminution of le Hardy to Hardy with the fall in social scale from the d’Urbervilles to Durbeyfields depicted in the novel *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891). Hardy appears to be more interested in those relatives who have established themselves as professionals with upper-class connections – no matter how remote or fanciful. Yet noted on the pedigree are snippets of information referring to other stories, such as the two Swetman sisters who, “When girls...were pursued by soldiers after the B. of Sedgemoor, & escaped by the back-stairs. Part of the house, divided into 2 cottages, is still standing, called Towns-end.”⁶²⁶ In this way, this document places Hardy within at least three different narratives: there is the story of the increasing professionalization of the Hardy family, the fall from grace of le Hardy to Hardy, and the survival narrative of the two sisters who escaped from soldiers after the Battle of Sedgemoor in 1685. Certainly, these different narratives were as important to Hardy’s social and psychological identity as a professional writer of Wessex as they were a romantic and imaginative source for his writing in general.

⁶²³ 'Preface' Thomas Hardy, *A Group of Noble Dames* (London: Macmillan, 1907); 'Introduction', George Sherwood, *The Pedigree Register*. 3 vols. Vol. 1 (London, 1907).

⁶²⁴ Lambert, 'Descriptive, narrative, and experiential pathways to symbolic ancestors', p. 319.

⁶²⁵ Robert Gittings, *Young Thomas Hardy* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1975), p. 3.

⁶²⁶ 'The Hardy Pedigree' (c.1917) Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, reproduced in Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy, a biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).pl.49.

Genealogy, then, can be seen not only as a method for finding out facts and for verifying the familial connections between people; it can be a source in which the dead are resurrected in the imagination and ‘made known’. It can be the foundation of autobiographical narrative which connects oneself to others and in doing so, reveals one’s identity and desire for ancestral storytelling. Taken as an expression of the desire for autobiography or narrative about the self, genealogical narrative raises several questions. What is the connection between narrative and life? To what extent can genealogical narrative fulfil or solve the problems and questions of identity? And what is the role of the archive in such a project? I will briefly address these questions before going on to examine several genealogical narratives in more depth.

For Barbara Hardy, narrative is an intricate part of life, narrative “is not to be regarded as an aesthetic invention used by artists to control, manipulate, and order experience, but as a primary act of mind transferred to art from life.”⁶²⁷ For her, storytelling:

... plays a major role in our sleeping and waking lives. For we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative. In order really to live, we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future.⁶²⁸

In contrast Louis Mink writes that:

Stories are not lived but told. Life has no beginnings, middles or ends; there are meetings, but the start of an affair belongs to the story we tell ourselves later, and there are partings, but final partings only in the story. There are hopes, plans, battles and ideas, but only in retrospective stories are hopes unfulfilled, plans miscarried, battles decisive, and ideas seminal. Only in the story is it America which Columbus discovers, and only in the story is the kingdom lost for the want of a nail.⁶²⁹

For him, life with its actions and events achieves significance only through narrative, which retrospectively imposes a coherent structure upon the ‘mere sequence’ of life. However, drawing upon Husserl and Heidegger’s notions of historicity or *Geschichtlichkeit*, David Carr develops Barbara Hardy’s thesis to argue that “narrative structure pervades our very experience of time and social existence” in that we experience life events as pre-thematic configurations “thanks to our protentional and retentive ‘gaze’

⁶²⁷ Barbara Hardy, 'Towards a Poetics of Fiction: 3) An Approach through Narrative', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 2:1 (1968), 5-14, p. 5.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁶²⁹ Louis Mink, 'History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension', *New Literary History*, 1:3 (1970), 541-58, p. 557.

which spans future and past.”⁶³⁰ As such, narrative is part of life, stories are “told in being lived and lived in being told. The actions and sufferings of life can be viewed as a process of telling ourselves stories, listening to those stories, and acting them out or living them through.”⁶³¹ In this way, storytelling is primarily “practical before it is aesthetic or cognitive.”⁶³²

To some extent Paul Ricoeur does corroborate Carr’s argument when in his description of *mimesis I* he ascribes a pre-narrative quality to action. In *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur analyses Augustine’s musings on time, which he principally characterizes as discordant. He goes on to explore the relation of narrative to such temporal paradoxes, which he analyses employing the Aristotelian terms, *muthos* (plot) and *mimesis* (imitation), the latter of which he divides into three components. The first of these, *mimesis I*, is informed by Hannah Arendt’s notion of human action which achieves its political and public status through resulting in a story or biography.⁶³³ As such, “history *repeats action* in the figure of the memorable.”⁶³⁴ As Ricoeur argues:

Whatever may be the status of these stories which somehow are prior to the narration we may give them, our mere use of the word ‘story’ (taken in this pre-narrative sense) testifies to our pre-understanding that action is human to the extent it characterizes a life story that deserves to be told.⁶³⁵

Ricoeur argues that in life there is an “inchoate narrativity” of untold or yet-to-be-told stories. Literature or stories are not imposed upon life, neither is life simply mirrored in narrative, instead experience “constitutes a genuine demand for narrative.”⁶³⁶ In turn, Ricoeur considers narrative to have a complex mimetic function which goes beyond simple imitation, narrative has a creative poetic function that not only imitates but also reconfigures the world. Ricoeur further hypothesises that the chasm between the two “great classes of narratives”: fiction and history, could meet in the narrative identity of a person. From this he makes several assertions that:

⁶³⁰ David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 24, 9.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, p.61.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁶³³ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 97.

⁶³⁴ Paul Ricoeur, 'The Human Experience of Time and Narrative', in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. by Mario J. Valdés (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 99-116, p. 115.

⁶³⁵ Paul Ricoeur, 'Mimesis and Representation', in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. by Mario J. Valdés (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 137-55, p. 142.

⁶³⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*. trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 73-74.

... self-understanding is an interpretation; interpretation of the self, in turn, finds in the narrative, among other signs and symbols, a privileged form of mediation; the latter borrows from history as well as from fiction making a life story a fictional history or, if one prefers, a historical fiction, interweaving the historiographic style of biographies with the novelistic style of imaginary autobiographies.⁶³⁷

In this way, genealogy can be seen as a semi-autobiographical narrative form that straddles the genres between history and fiction; it can be seen as a kind of hybrid genre that tells a story about the self and one's origins.

However, Carr does not think that Ricoeur goes far enough in eradicating the discontinuity between life and narrative. In his focus on historical narratives as literary productions, Carr argues that Ricoeur falls back into the sharp distinction made by Mink between life and narrative: "in the end for Ricoeur narrative structure is as alien from the 'real world' as it is for [Mink]."⁶³⁸ In his phenomenological examination of the "real world", Carr goes beyond the world of the history as institutional practice, with its agreed methodology, body of professionals and canon of literature, to examine what the past means for 'us' in a pre-thematic sense. I am attempting a similar project in that I investigate genealogy not so much as a branch of historical literary production but as a more basic form of narrative about the self. It can be argued that the narratives that concern oneself and one's origins are not just a lesser form of literary or historical work, but that they spring from this pre-thematic experience of life before they are made into genealogical literature.

What is the connection between archives and this pre-thematic narrativity? Carr argues that "the raw material with which the historian works is an already narrativized world."⁶³⁹

While there is not space within this thesis to explore the pre-thematic phenomenological aspects of life and narrative fully, this chapter is concerned with the "raw material with which the historian works", namely the archive and its relation to genealogical narrative. From a positivist perspective, during the nineteenth century, archival manuscripts became "to the humanities what observable natural phenomena were to the sciences."⁶⁴⁰ But archives are not 'raw', they are "narrativized"; but neither are they completely 'cooked' in the sense that literary or historical publications are. Rather, it can be argued that the archive – encompassing the reified and serialized products and traces of human action and

⁶³⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*. trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 114.

⁶³⁸ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, p. 15.

⁶³⁹ David Carr, 'Review: [untitled]', *History and Theory*, 23:3 (1984), 357-70, p. 369.

⁶⁴⁰ Michael Moss, 'Archives, the Historian and the Future', in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. by Michael Bentley (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 960-73, p. 960.

thought – forms a kind of theatre in which self-identity can in turn be acted out and performed. This performance is not separate from life, nor imposed upon it, but is part of active life that makes up our shared social world.

Some of these notions can be related to Heidegger's concept of the temporality and the self-interpreting aspects of *Dasein*. One could argue that the significant genealogical events are those that concern being, or more specifically that concern *Dasein*, namely, the stretch between birth and death. A similar sense of temporality can be seen in J. B. Priestley's play, *Time and the Conways* (1937) when one of the characters, Alan, reflects:

... now, at this moment, or any moment, we're only a cross-section of our real selves. What we *really* are is the whole stretch of ourselves, all our time, and when we come to the end of this life, all those selves, all our time, will be *us* – the real you, the real me.⁶⁴¹

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger hints at what this could mean beyond the individual when he writes that:

In its factual Being, any *Dasein* is as it already was, and it is 'what' it already was. It *is* its past, whether explicitly or not. [...] Its own past – and this always means the past of its 'generation' – is not something which *follows along after* *Dasein*, but something which already goes ahead of it.⁶⁴²

The term 'generation' is significant because it both implies the idea of a past stage of descent, of historicity and tradition, and the generation, or production or originating, of the new. In another sense, one is born into a generation and has a relation to a previous generation. Tradition, values, lifestyle are handed over to us from others and also handed down to us from the past. Heidegger writes that "Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic historicizing of *Dasein*."⁶⁴³ Individual fate or collective destiny is inherited as being part of a generation, in this sense it "goes ahead" of *Dasein*. Through continual repetition, *Wiederholung*, inherited potentialities can be explicitly, authentically and resolutely chosen. As Heidegger writes: "This is how we designate *Dasein*'s primordial historicizing, which lies in authentic resoluteness and in which *Dasein* *hands itself down* to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen."⁶⁴⁴ On one level, genealogical narrative, with its preoccupations with

⁶⁴¹ J. B. Priestley, *Time and the Conways: A play in three acts, French's acting edition*. (London: Samuel French, 1939). II.p.59.

⁶⁴² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. trans. John Macquarrie and Edward S. Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwood, 1973), p. 41.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.436.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.435.

origins and the “extraordinary conjunction in times, events, and personages”, that created one’s birth, that ‘threw’ the agent into existence, combined with the kind of moral evaluations which can be part of genealogical discourse, can be interpreted as expression of this, as a way of authentically being loyally resolute towards death, as part of a way of becoming who one is.⁶⁴⁵ In this sense, genealogy, as an active mode of storytelling, can be interpreted as part of existential becoming.

Adriana Cavarero has also explored the relation between storytelling and selfhood, in doing so she recounts a story that the author, Karen Blixen was told as a child. In this story, a man, who lived by a pond, is woken up in the middle of the night by a loud noise. He goes out to investigate and guided by the noise heads in the direction of the pond. However, he becomes disorientated. He falls down and in his confusion runs back and forth. Eventually he discovers that there is a leak in the dike from where water and fish are escaping. He mends the leak and when finished goes back to bed. In the morning, he looks out of his window and sees that his footprints had made the figure of a stork in the mud. Blixen then asks herself: “When the design of my life is complete, will I see, or will others see a stork?”⁶⁴⁶ This story can be seen as a metaphor for biographical and autobiographical narrative; we live our lives, making tracks in the mud, responding to unforeseen events, sometimes with a plan and sometimes without. Yet our lives leaves traces, as Cavarero writes: “the design is what that life, without ever being able to predict or even imagine it, leaves behind.”⁶⁴⁷ For Cavarero, the design is one’s life-story:

The meaning that saves each life from being a mere sequence of events does not consist in a determined figure; but rather consists precisely in leaving behind a figure, or something from which the unity of a design can be discerned in the telling of the story.⁶⁴⁸

The figure of the stork reveals our uniqueness and gives us unity. What is significant – despite the legibility of the figure of the stork – is the desire for the design or the life-story, as a unified figure of a unique life lived. Regardless of the narrative form, the desire for genealogical knowledge, the wish to map out the lives and relations of ancestors with names and dates, is perhaps also driven by the same need for life story. In this respect, what is desired from archives is biography. It is the desire for the *who*, *this* one and not another. While history can supply types and stories that are typical of a kind of person, for

⁶⁴⁵ 'Preface', Hardy, *A Group of Noble Dames*.

⁶⁴⁶ Karen Blixen cited by Adriana Cavarero, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 1.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., p.1.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., p.2.

example, the typical First World War soldier, the typical nineteenth-century scullery maid, the typical eighteenth-century agricultural labourer – the *what* in other words – only biographical information can provide the *who*. This is perhaps why the connection of unique archival material to the individual matters so much to genealogists. As Moss argues:

There is a marked reluctance by family historians to employ the historian's craft of drawing on surrogates to elaborate the story. If the record is not of my great grandfather then I do not want to see it, even if other records might shed light on what it might have been like to live at such and such a time or be employed in such and such an occupation.⁶⁴⁹

As previously mentioned, the term 'pedigree' is thought to be derived from the French phrase *pied de grue*, 'crane's-foot'. The diagram of a pedigree looks like a stork's foot, where two lines are merged into one, and typically family 'trees' are made up of these branching shapes. While Cavarero uses Blixen's story as a metaphor for one life-story, the genealogical 'tree' or concatenation of 'storks' feet' could represent a metaphorical extension of the life-story as a matrix representing the interwoven pattern of several lives, seen and retold by another. The figure of the stork can only be viewed from a posthumous perspective: "The stork is only seen at the end, when whoever has drawn it with his life – or when *other* spectators, looking from above – see the prints *left* on the ground."⁶⁵⁰ We need someone else to view our lives to see the unique pattern of the stork, to recount our life-story. Cavarero describes the completion of a life-story as "peculiar" and as part of a "relational ethic of contingency", where "there lies at the center of the narrative scene a *who* which – far from enclosing herself within the pride of a self-referential ego meant to last forever – gathers the in-born matrix of an expositive and relational existence."⁶⁵¹ In this way, this relational aspect, or what Carr calls "the relay-form or handing-down form, which runs from predecessors to successors", forms the social structure of genealogical narrative and life.⁶⁵²

In turn, the man's footprints can be seen also as a metaphor for the archive. We live and leave traces behind – in the recollections of others, in documents, objects, images and buildings, and in the things, like Billington, which we inherit.⁶⁵³ Some footprints are

⁶⁴⁹ Moss, 'Choreographed Encounter-The Archive and Public History', p. 43.

⁶⁵⁰ Cavarero, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, p. 2.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.87.

⁶⁵² Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, p. 113.

⁶⁵³ 'Billington' in Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry., *Personally Speaking about this Ancestry Business*, p. 77.

intentional and others are serendipitous. Some are heavily imprinted in the mud but others are soon washed away or covered over. For Arendt, the reification of speech and action through the memory of others into traces and things in the world is what gives reality to “deeds and facts and events and patterns of thought or ideas”. For speech and action to become “worldly”:

... they must first be seen, heard, and remembered and then transformed, reified as it were into things – into sayings of poetry, the written page or the printed book, into paintings or sculpture, into all sorts of records, documents, and monuments. The whole factual world of human affairs depends for its reality and its continued existence, first, upon the presence of others who have seen and heard and will remember, and, second, on the transformation of the intangible into the tangibility of things.⁶⁵⁴

These tangible things are fabricated and make up the common shared world through their durability. Action and speech are reified in the archive, principally through the creation and preservation of writing, but also through poetry and song, architecture, monuments and objects, which create a shared social space or public theatre through which stories – biographical stories – can be retold by and to others. Life stories achieve their shared reality and world-hood from the archive. In turn, the historiographical element of the life-story is reliant upon the trace, the document and the archive. Records, documents and traces, such as birth certificates, photographs and Hardy’s “Townsend” cottages, not only provide the material for historiography, but also act as pre-given, shared, inherited “kernels” or nodes within genealogical narrative.⁶⁵⁵

But what is the connection between the action of identification and archives? In *Oneself as Another* (1992), Ricoeur expands upon his theory of narrative to consider its contribution to the constitution of the self. He distinguishes between two models of personal identity: *idem*-identity or sameness, and *ipse*-identity or selfhood. He describes these as overlapping yet distinct poles, with character, by which a person can be identified and re-identified as the same, at one pole and self-constancy, of as being true to one’s word, as being accountable for one’s actions before another, at the other pole. To Ricoeur, narrative identity stands between these two poles, linking “the permanence in time of character and

⁶⁵⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 95.

⁶⁵⁵ Madan Sarup, *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 15.

that of self-constancy” together.⁶⁵⁶ These two poles can be used to explain some of the tensions and difficulties that genealogical narrative addresses and contains.

In one respect, documents and archives partake in the process of identification at the basic level of recognition. This exists at the pole of character as “the set of distinctive marks which permit the reidentification of a human individual as being the same.”⁶⁵⁷ The marking of an individual is at stake here. Jane Caplan writes that the “experience of self-sameness is...never unmediated, either subjectively or objectively; it operates through a system of signs and recognitions that intrudes alterity into the heart of identity.”⁶⁵⁸ This alterity consists of the contiguous relation between the self through time and the document or sign that is enacted through the repeated processes of recognition. The identity document or sign is a bureaucratic synecdoche, a token that attests or proves the authentic object: the *idem*-self. In this sense or use, character takes on a double meaning as sign and as person. The contiguous and somewhat arbitrary nature of this relation means that moments of identification or recognition are – in Terence Cave’s words – “problem moments” which provide points of dramatic tension.⁶⁵⁹ Arguably, it is overcoming these problem moments that makes recognition a unique and emotional moment.

Recognition is not exclusive to genealogical narratives of discovery. Indeed, recognition is a ubiquitous literary device known as *anagnorisis*, or the poetics of recognition, which is famously exploited in the *Oedipus* myth. It can also be seen as a key part of the historiographical process. This is perhaps expressed by Jean Greisch, when she writes:

My late teacher’s exclamation: ‘It’s him!’ is just overstated shorthand for the work of recognition and identification that plays a central role in the historiographic process.⁶⁶⁰

Furthermore, it is the drama of these problem moments that adds tension and interest to programmes such as *Who Do You Think You Are?*. While the actual characters of the researched relatives no longer exist, the documents and traces that attest to their unique character – the photograph, the name in the register, the item of clothing – are evocative as

⁶⁵⁶ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, p. 165.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., p.119.

⁶⁵⁸ Jane Caplan, 'This or That Particular Person': Protocols of Identification in Nineteenth-Century Europe', in *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*, ed. by Jane Caplan and John Torpey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 49-66, pp. 51-52.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ Jean Greisch, 'Trace and Forgetting: Between the Threat of Erasure and the Persistence of the Unerasable', *Diogenes*:201 (2004), 77-97.

metonyms and only achieve their metonymic status if recognized as uniquely connected to the pattern of the life-story. The viewer wants the lost, unnamed ancestors to be ‘found’ and ‘encountered’⁶⁶¹ – they want the celebrity protagonist to recognize their ancestors as unique and they want to vicariously recognize and know them too, and this desire is whetted by the risk of apocalyptic revelation.

The other pole of Ricoeur’s model of self-identity – *ipse*-identity or selfhood – raises the ethical consideration of being true to one’s word, and this ethical aspect of self-constancy can also be found in the creation of genealogical narratives when the question “Who are you?” is answered by the orientating affirmation, “Here I am!”.⁶⁶² Such a response could also be given to the question, ‘Where are you?’, and part of being true to one’s word is to be orientated in a location, to be ‘here’, placed amongst and in relation to others. This placing, while it can be geographical or genealogical, is predominately moral.

In *Sources of the Self* (1989), the philosopher, Charles Taylor argues that the question of identity, of answering the question, “Who?”, is inextricably interwoven with morality. Family history to some extent can be said to partake in this moral paradigm of selfhood in the extent to which it affirms the ordinary life and also to the extent in which it is used as a tool in the processes of interlocation. Taylor describes the “affirmation of ordinary life” as a “term of art, meant roughly to designate the life of production and the family.”⁶⁶³ He argues that after the Reformation, the ordinary life became the centre of the good life and that this notion of the ordinary life took a central place in Western society, powering the “most influential revolutionary ideology of our century, Marxism, with its apotheosis of man the producer.”⁶⁶⁴ On one level, this partly explains the social historian’s attraction to family history as the celebration of the ordinary and the ‘honest yeomanry’. As such, genealogy can also be seen as a celebration of production in the reproduction of life itself. However, from a Marxist perspective, in a capitalist modern society, the ordinary life of production is under threat; “man the producer” is alienated from his material products and, through the operation of ideology, his fellow proletarians. Genealogy can be seen as a

⁶⁶¹ ‘Finding’ is different to ‘encountering’ as ‘encountering’ implies meeting with another person and also has implications of conflict, opposition, contention or confrontation. More recently encountering has connotations of achieving greater self-awareness and understanding of others, as in ‘encounter group.’ See ‘encounter’, in *The Chambers Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrup Publishers, 2001), p. 531.

⁶⁶² Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, p. 167.

⁶⁶³ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 13.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.14.

response – if an ultimately false one – to such modern alienation. In 1945, a journalist argued that genealogy was a reaction to the anonymity of modernity:

It is the natural reaction to the feeling which many of us ordinary citizens share, an awareness that vast and powerful forces are at work to docket us as card-index entries, labour units, consumer factors, social statistics – anything but men with names.⁶⁶⁵

Yet while genealogy focuses on the individual stories, upon “men with names”, and can be seen as reclamation of the power of modern state archives “to docket us as card-index entries, labour units, consumer factors, social statistics”, the family itself can also be seen as a barrier to true community and political freedom. In contrast to Marx, for Arendt, man is not alienated from his products so much as alienated from the world. Freedom and access to the world is achieved through participation in the public sphere, which, defined by the ancient Greek distinction between *koinon* and *idion*, is separate and free from the necessities of life imposed by the private domestic sphere of the family.⁶⁶⁶ However, Arendt considers that distinction between the private or household realm in which the life is maintained and the public or political common world has become blurred and subsumed into the social through the rise of the nation-state. Under the conditions of modernity, the nation-state or the social realm has become a larger ‘family’ in which the private shelter has been lost, thereby creating a sense of alienation. She writes:

... we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping. The scientific thought that corresponds to this development is no longer political science but ‘national economy’ or ‘social economy’ or *Volkswirtschaft*, all of which indicate a kind of ‘collective house-keeping’; the collective of families economically organized into the facsimile of one super-human family is what we call ‘society,’ and its political form of organization is called ‘nation.’⁶⁶⁷

Accordingly, “society always demands that its members act as though they were members of one enormous family which has only one opinion and only one interest.”⁶⁶⁸ As such, genealogy which, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, increased in popularity in the latter half of the nineteenth century can be seen as a reaction to this modern alienation which arose out of the sublimation of the private domestic sphere into the social sphere, and the

⁶⁶⁵ Stewart, ‘Thar’s Gold in Them Thar Pedigrees!’.

⁶⁶⁶ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 24.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.28-29.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.39.

coterminous rise of the “super-human family” of the nation-state with its archival housekeeping.

At the same time, precisely because it is concerned with the domestic sphere and the “subjectivity of privacy”, genealogy is at risk of being alienated from the public and political world. The common shared world is created through the plurality of perspectives, whereas family life propagates only one perspective:

Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life, compared to which even the richest and most satisfying family life can offer only the prolongation or multiplication of one’s own position with its attending aspects and perspectives. The subjectivity of privacy can be prolonged and multiplied in a family, it can even become so strong that its weight is felt in the public realm; but this family ‘world’ can never replace the reality rising out of the sum total of aspects presented by one object to a multitude of spectators. Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear.⁶⁶⁹

As such, in its opposition to the “super-human family” of the nation, genealogy is at risk of retreating and disappearing in the subjectivity and unreality of the private sphere. The hearing and seeing from different perspectives enables a worldly reality to appear and public life is dependent upon this inter-encountering. Yet genealogy is an activity. Through archival research, publication and public broadcast, genealogy to some extent can partake in public encounters and is not privative or subjective; after all it is dependent upon a shared world which can reliably appear as a “sum total of aspects”. In other words, genealogy becomes public, true and historical to the extent it corroborates with the shared and multiple appearances of archives. At the same time, it is also dependent upon the perceived quality of acts performed in the public sphere, acts which are worthy of memory, of history, and of being remembered in the archive, of acts which are extraordinary. Often the only act that is recorded is the birth, marriage or death of the citizen in the public family of the nation, what is only revealed in the public archive is a name, a ‘Smith’ in a list of ‘Smiths’, what is left is “the shallowest footprints... a name in a directory, a poor law register, a census or a list of emigrants.”⁶⁷⁰

Perhaps to compensate for this domestic privation and social anonymity, interlocution is needed. Taylor continues his discussion of morality and identity by focussing on the

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., p.57.

⁶⁷⁰ Moss, 'Choreographed Encounter-The Archive and Public History', p. 42.

identity of the self. Self-identity for Taylor is a social and moral process of interlocution. He argues that to answer the question, *Who do you think you are?*⁶⁷¹ is to orientate oneself as one among others in a “community of interlocutors”. It is to work out what is or isn’t meaningful to oneself.⁶⁷² This process goes beyond the repetition of genealogical data. He writes:

Who am I? But this can’t necessarily be answered by giving a name and genealogy. What does answer this question for us is an understanding of what is of crucial importance to us. To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand.⁶⁷³

To some extent this process of taking a stand can be found in the imaginative processes of genealogical research; very often it is the process of relaying stories through interlocution with one’s family and acquaintances that helps to create the moral horizons of self-identification and commitment. Again, this provides sources of conflict useful for the production of dramatic narrative. This is perhaps why traditional genealogy has been concerned with vices and virtues, why there are heroes and villains, skeletons in the closet, and why sometimes family history is a tricky business.⁶⁷⁴

While on a superficial level, “giving a name and a genealogy” does not answer the question ‘Who am I?’, nonetheless, in a similar way to genealogical narrative, the *process* of nomenclature is important here. It is not so much the name itself as the process of naming and being called that is significant. In Taylor’s dialectic there is no place for the everyman or the nobody – everybody is somebody and this is epitomised by the naming conventions, in which one develops a self-identity among others through being called by and into a moral space constituted by a community of interlocutors. He writes:

⁶⁷¹ Other programmes in the same genre as *Who Do You Think You Are?* have similar rhetorical accusatory titles and include, *You Don’t Know You’re Born* and *So You Think You’re Royalty*. All the titles rhetorically call for an answer and perhaps seem to be the kind of statement that someone from the older generation would say to the younger.

⁶⁷² Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, pp. 27-31.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.27.

⁶⁷⁴ For example, the actress Patsy Kensit walked out during the filming of an episode for *Who Do You Think You Are?* when she discovered that her father and grandfather were criminals. Mark Jeffries, 'Patsy Kensit left in tears as BBC show reveals her family's gangland links', *Daily Record* (2008), <<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/news-feed/2008/08/05/patsy-quits-family-tree-show-over-gangland-grandpa-86908-20684424/>> [accessed 7 August 2008].

The close connection between identity and interlocution also emerges in the place of *names* in human life. My name is what I am ‘called.’ A human being *has* to have a name, because he or she has to be *called*, i.e., addressed. Being called into conversation is a precondition of developing a human identity, and so my name is (usually) given me by my earliest interlocutors.⁶⁷⁵

In *Who Do You Think You Are?* this being called into a community of interlocutors is doubly framed: first by the protagonist’s family; then by virtue of their making a name for themselves as a celebrity in the larger family of the national mediascape. In these respects genealogy has become something other than a populist branch of history, or an expression of outdated and inauthentic identification. Neither is it a completely frivolous narcissistic hobby. As a form of modern life-story, genealogy can be a vehicle for uncovering unique existents and when enacted in the public sphere, for grounding oneself in a moral horizon of interlocution. Such processes of interlocution and appellation are not pre-given and immutable, but are socially and historically conditioned. Within Britain, a change can perhaps be perceived in the memorial culture that followed the First World War, when a communal and generational sense of time emerged at the national level. It is for this reason that we shall now turn to an examination of communal memory and its relation to private, familial archivization and interlocution.

A Family Record

A Family Record (1932) was compiled by Mary Constance Charteris, Countess of Wemyss in memory of her two sons, Hugo Francis Lord Elcho, nicknamed, “Ego” and Yvo Alan Charteris who died fighting in the First World War. Unlike, *Roots*, *Who Do You Think You Are?* and *Motherland: A Genetic Journey*, this book is primarily not about the search for the self through genealogical research: it was principally written as a memorial and a way for family and friends to remember, or get to know, their lost relatives. Like the Merivale family history referred to in Chapter Two, it was privately printed and was a domestic project written by the maternal head of the family for “her children and grandchildren and a few intimate friends.”⁶⁷⁶ As such, the narrative leaves out details that the reader is presumed to know and includes private family jokes, nicknames and “nonsense-language”.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁵ Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, p. 32.

⁶⁷⁶ ‘Preface’, Mary Constance Wemyss Charteris-Douglas Wemyss, *A Family Record* (London: Privately printed at the Curwen Press, 1932).

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.277.

Placed alongside Lady Ellen Anne Priscilla Grenfell Desborough's *Pages From a Family Journal 1888-1915* (1916) and Lady Frances Jane Horner's *Time Remembered* (1933), *A Family Record* can be seen as part of a small genre of genealogical and memorial literature that was created by aristocratic 'Souls' women in memory of their dead sons in the aftermath of the First World War.⁶⁷⁸ The 'Souls' were an elite social group of which Mary was a leading hostess. They set themselves apart from the rest of aristocratic society, preferring literature, golf and personal intimate relationships to field sports and ostentatious display. The loss of life experienced during the First World War was particularly felt amongst the upper classes and amongst the 'Souls'. In proportion to other social classes, the percentage of sons of peers killed in the war was higher than average, as it was also for those who were recruited from Oxbridge and the public schools.⁶⁷⁹ Yvo, who left Eton to join up, died after three weeks in France, aged barely nineteen. Ego, who studied at Trinity College, Oxford became Captain of the Gloucester Hussars and died fighting in Katia. Their cousin, George Hereman Wyndham was killed in March 1915. In the *Book of Remembrance* that was re-produced as part of *A Family Record*, relatives of Ego and Yvo are listed, as are other sons of the 'Souls' group, indicating that for this elite social network there certainly was a 'lost generation.'

A Family Record is divided into four parts. A chapter is dedicated to each lost son, these two chapters are sandwiched between "Prelude: Three Homes" and concluded with a chapter entitled "War". In this way, the structure of the book indicates a tension between private home life and peacetime, and public life and war. The three homes, Gosford, Clouds and Stanway, act as *lieux de mémoire* as Mary structures the family history around these three places and the inherited objects, memories and stories they exude. Describing her beloved Stanway as a "House of Memories", she writes that its "mellow walls are steeped in the joys and sorrows of many generations who have lived and loved within them", similarly, her "sitting-room is so steeped in memories that it is almost impossible to sit in it alone."⁶⁸⁰ The following chapters are taken up with descriptions of the boy's childhoods which largely consisted of numerous rounds of cricket matches, tea parties, dinners, childhood illnesses and holiday jaunts, as they flitted between public school and the three homes. This repetition of family rituals, such as weddings, birthdays, family meal

⁶⁷⁸ Ethel Anne Priscilla Lady Desborough Grenfell, *Pages from a Family Journal, 1888-1915* ([Eton] Eton College, 1916); Frances Horner, *Time Remembered* (London: William Heinemann, 1933). Vita Sackville-West was not a member of the Souls group, however, in 1922 she did publish a family history of the Sackvilles and their family seat in Kent, see V. Sackville-West, *Knole and the Sackvilles* (London: William Heinemann, 1934).

⁶⁷⁹ Jay M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People*. 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2003), pp. 92-99.

⁶⁸⁰ Wemyss, *A Family Record*, pp. 36, 38, 40-41.

times and holidays reveals a domestic and familial sense of time. In her investigation of domestic material culture, Pearce argues that women predominately create homes as the material site of the family and through the “maintenance of family rituals” they also “structure family time.”⁶⁸¹ As such, Mary’s archivization of the family’s memories in the compilation of *A Family Record* is part of her role in creating a sense of home, family and familial time. In her study of French bourgeois rituals during the Victorian period, Anne Martin-Fugier writes of a private family time that:

... embodied two contradictory qualities. It was regular, owing to the repetition of periodic family rituals. Yet this regular and cyclical time, smooth and uninterrupted – a time that was not oppressive to individuals but that flowed through them, as it were, in a biological continuum – was meant to establish a kind of eternity.⁶⁸²

This ritual sense of familial time was not only focussed upon childhood but was also crystallized by the First World War. Echoing J. M. Barrie, her playwright friend and creator of Peter Pan who used to rent Stanway during the war, Mary wrote: “Home is not the place in which we once were young, it is the place where we have never grown up!”⁶⁸³ The irony and cruelty was that three of her sons, Ego, Yvo and also Colin, who died aged three, did not ‘grow up’. In this way, family history has its own familial private time, which is cyclical and continuous. On the one hand, family history can be seen as a continuation of the Victorian “cult of childhood.”⁶⁸⁴ On the other, its nostalgia is underscored by the event of the First World War, private grief, and our knowledge of the post-First World War period.

The book resembles an archive in that it is filled with correspondence, memoirs, diary extracts, notes, sermons, photographs, copies of portraits and a facsimile of leaves from a *Book of Remembrance* and sermons preached at the memorial services of the two sons. As such, the work can be seen as a form of collective memory that lies between individual memory and official public commemoration. Maurice Halbwachs views the family as the primary social framework for not only one’s memories but also for one’s *idem*-identity as sameness within a group. He writes that collective memories “consist not only of a series of individual images of the past. They are at the same time models, examples, and elements

⁶⁸¹ Pearce, 'The construction of heritage: The domestic context and its implications', p. 101.

⁶⁸² Anne Martin-Fugier, 'Bourgeois Rituals', in *A History of Private Life: Vol.IV: From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, ed. by Michelle Perrot (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1990), pp. 261-338, p. 337.

⁶⁸³ Wemyss, *A Family Record*, p. 36.

⁶⁸⁴ Jackie Wullschläger, *Inventing Wonderland: The Lives and Fantasies of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J. M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame and A. A. Milne*. Rev. edn (London: Methuen, 2001), p. 6.

of teaching. They express the general attitude of the group; they not only reproduce its history but also define its nature and its qualities and weaknesses.”⁶⁸⁵ In this way, collective memory becomes a kind of armour for the group, a source of tradition and collective identity:

When we say, ‘In our family we have long life spans,’ or ‘we are proud,’ or ‘we do not strive to get rich,’ we speak of a physical or moral quality which is supposed to be inherent in the group, and which passes from the group to its members...the various elements of this type that are retained from the past provide a framework for family memory, which it tries to preserve intact, and which, so to speak, is the traditional armour of the family. Even though this framework is constituted by facts that can be dated – by images that last only for a certain span of time, as one finds in it judgements that the family and those surrounding it have expressed about themselves – it partakes of the nature of those collective notions that cannot be placed in a particular place or at a definitive moment, and that seem to dominate the course of time.⁶⁸⁶

In this way, the character of the social body – whether the Wemyss family, the ‘Souls’, the local community, or the nation – achieves through collective narration a kind of protective and collective identity.

This collective unity can be seen in the first photograph in *A Family Record*. Entitled “Four Generations” it sets the genealogical scene and conforms to pattern of inheritance as four generations of the male line are shown, the youngest in a pram, his great-grandfather reaching to touch his cheek. Similarly, the *Record* is emblazoned with the family coat-of-arms and the first chapter, ‘Gosford’, gives the chronicle of the Earls of Wemyss down the generations and the foundation and changes to the Gosford estate. There are no clues of Mary’s seduction by her cousin Wilfred Scawen Blunt, who fathered one of her daughters, nor of Hugo’s mistress. This is a reflection of the Wemyss’ family life and their social climate, as illegitimate children were accepted by the elder Hugo and the couple did not divorce. However, despite appearances, the record also hints that the family was not a bounded social object, Mary was mother to seven children and material is included from nannies, servants and intimate friends – included are numerous notes from and references to A. J. Balfour, who in addition to being Prime Minister was a central figure of the ‘Souls’. Nicknamed “King Arthur”, Balfour was also possibly one of Mary’s lovers.⁶⁸⁷ The ‘Souls’ represented a kind of independent semi-fictive kinship; a genealogical diagram, composed by Jane Abdy and Charlotte Gere, shows the intermarriages and connections of

⁶⁸⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 59.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.59.

⁶⁸⁷ Jane Abdy and Charlotte Gere, *The Souls* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984), p. 9.

this social circle, including four of Mary's children who married within the group.⁶⁸⁸ In this way, while the traditional genealogical line of inheritance of property is described and reinforced, the life of the family within the 'Souls' circle, its relations, implicit tensions and conflicts is also reflected in the heterogeneity and intimacy of its records.

However, what is perhaps most significant about *A Family Record* is the connection between death and the need for the family to record itself. The corollary to Halbwach's thesis that we can not remember alone, is that when people die, their memories – including their memories of ourselves – die with them. It is, therefore, only through the propagation of collective memory of the group that forgetfulness can be kept at bay. Halbwachs writes that collective memory continues to:

... the extent that the dead retreat into the past, this is not because the material measure of time that separates them from us lengthens; it is because nothing remains of the group in which they passed their lives, and which needed to name them, that their names slowly became obliterated.⁶⁸⁹

Pitched against the obliteration of memory, is history as collective memory or as archive. For the historian, Jules Michelet, to remember was not only an act that metaphorically resurrected the dead, but it was also to invoke a new kind of imagined community of both the living and the dead. He viewed his act of remembrance in altruistic terms writing that:

I have given to many of the disregarded dead the assistance that I shall myself need. I have exhumed them for a second life ... They live now among we who feel ourselves to be their parents, their friends. Thus is made a family, a city community of the living and the dead.⁶⁹⁰

To some extent this family, city and community of the living and the dead is imagined. Halbwachs goes on to write that the "only ancestors transmitted and retained are those whose memory has become the object of a cult by men who remain at least fictitiously in contact with them. The others become part of an anonymous mass."⁶⁹¹ In this sense, the archive and *A Family Record* have become the theatre for this contact, a place where unique existents can be saved from anonymity and forgetfulness, becoming a kind of personal memorial ground.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., p.185.

⁶⁸⁹ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 73.

⁶⁹⁰ Jules Michelet cited by Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 71.

⁶⁹¹ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 73.

The scale and speed of mechanized war and its accompanying alienation perhaps emphasized the need for ‘fictitious contact’, the need to remember the *who*, especially during war time when news of fatalities and the whereabouts of persons was hard to confirm. Pitched against the mechanics of war – which treated soldiers as reified replaceable and exchangeable parts within the larger machine of the army – was a campaign to identify and remember the names of the lost. On the one hand, war exposed the heroic deeds of action and raised people from lower ranks of society to the public stage. On the other hand, at the same time in its banal anonymity and forgetfulness, war worked to deprive death of its meaning. As Arendt writes:

Action without a name, a ‘who’ attached to it, is meaningless ... The monuments to the ‘Unknown Soldier’ after World War 1 bear testimony to the then still existing need for glorification, for finding a ‘who,’ an identifiable somebody whom four years of mass slaughter should have revealed. The frustration of this wish and the unwillingness to resign oneself to the brutal fact that the agent of the war was actually nobody inspired the erection of the monuments to the ‘unknown,’ to all those whom the war had failed to make known and had robbed thereby, not of their achievement, but of their human dignity.⁶⁹²

During the First World War, the British state for the first time took responsibility for recording the names of the fallen soldiers – regardless of their rank or individual valour.⁶⁹³ Pressure to record all of the names of the dead arose out of the fact that a large majority of soldiers were not unattached men who signed-up and died, but sons, husbands, brothers, neighbours and friends. Accordingly, part “of the function of the obsession with lists and rolls was the concern of the bereaved to see proper recognition accorded to the individuality of their loss”.⁶⁹⁴ Through the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission a kind of national collective memory or collective rhetoric of commemoration emerged which “had the effect of enhancing and enshrining the experience of the war, thereby removing it from the sphere of normal social and political debate and elevating it to a level of spiritual significance from where its memory for peacetime British society was a of a special, supranational and sacred quality.”⁶⁹⁵

Whilst a stable, national rhetoric of remembrance was fashioned and individuals’ names were officially listed and honoured for service to their country, there was still an

⁶⁹² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 180-81.

⁶⁹³ Thomas W. Laqueur, ‘Memory and Naming in the Great War’, in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. by John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 150-67.

⁶⁹⁴ Bob Bushaway, ‘Name Upon Name: The Great War and Remembrance’, in *Myths of the English*, ed. by Roy Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 136-67, p. 139.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.160.

abstraction of the *who*. Precisely 54,896 names were commemorated on the surface of the Menin Gate, Ypres. However, the names were hard to find. Thomas Lacquer argues that their number made them almost decorative, like Islamic art.⁶⁹⁶ On the one hand, the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey symbolized an ‘everyman’ and belonged to all. The *Times* reported that: “Never before has there been such a proclamation, gladly made, that we are all equal, all members of one body, or rather one soul.”⁶⁹⁷ Such sentiments were significant in a climate of social unrest and strike action. Yet on the other hand, whilst belonging to the nation, the tomb belonged to no-one in particular. Similarly, the memorial headstones erected at the 2,000 or so cemeteries in France were uniform, without distinction and equal, representing in their uniformity the amassed army of the dead and their sacrifice to their country. According to the rules laid down by the Imperial War Graves Commission, families were not allowed to choose the memorial stone and they were not allowed to bring bodies home.

In contrast to this “distinctly modern way of creating meaning”⁶⁹⁸, literary memorials such as *A Family Record* can be seen as a more traditional way of recording and bringing to light the life-story of the unique existent, the story of their death and their relations. Such memorialisation was especially significant because it was not old people who had naturally died, but young people who were cut off from promising and imagined futures. The sharing of stories and memories, through letters, poems, accounts and photographs enabled families and friends to not only mourn what had passed, but also to come to terms with what could have been. It was also a way for younger generations to get to know their lost parents. Included in the *Record* is a précis of the official history of the military operations in Egypt and Palestine written by Ego’s son Martin, as such, ‘proper’ history is placed within the larger context of familial history. Alongside official accounts, contemporary letters provide a vital source of criticism. Ego wrote that:

Gallipoli seems the last word in hell. The winter campaign – sitting in trenches won’t be much fun, constant shell-fire, wherever they are, day and night – no water – and black pessimism. It is a serious thing the pessimism out here about the Dardanelles and should be stopped. You never hear of anything but bungling and ghastly casualties. It is no fun being killed when you feel it is just hopeless waste.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁶ Laqueur, ‘Memory and Naming in the Great War’, p. 154.

⁶⁹⁷ London Times Armistice Day Supplement I, November 12, 1920 cited by Ibid., p. 158.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., p.158.

⁶⁹⁹ Letter from Ego in Egypt to his mother, 10 September 1915, Wemyss, *A Family Record*, p. 347.

Similarly, Ego's wife Letty, in reference to what became known in the history books as the 'Affair of Katia' in which Ego died, wrote that: "Someone is terribly to blame for sending and leaving out small forces like that, 30 miles from their base, only a thread of communication, which was immediately cut, and no hope of reinforcements."⁷⁰⁰ Letters of condolence have a more respectful tone. The professor of English, Sir Walter Raleigh urged Mary to compile *A Family Record*:

You must do that book. The war is not, as we sometimes think it, merely the fatigue and trail of today; it's the war, very likely of a thousand years, and all the children for centuries to come will be fed on it. Ego and Yvo gave their lives for us, quite straight and simple, and the record ought not to be left to slips of paper, which get lost ... I do hope there will be the fullest possible account of Katia. It's the losing fights that have done most to win the war. The wonderful young! Would they have become the bothered, harassed, tolerant, habitual old that we all become? They were not born for that. Could Julian [Grenfell] ever have been an elderly clubman? A whole generation saved from having to combat the slow sapping and mining of selfishness. They can laugh at selfishness, which we hardly dare to do.⁷⁰¹

In its plurality of voices and sources, *A Family Record* offers a different kind of commemorative work that stands in opposition to the uniformity of national memorial culture. It can be seen as a continuation of private Victorian archival practice, and as an expression of familial grief.

A Family Record also sheds some light on the family's connections with spiritualism. A Victorian phenomenon, spiritualism did not die out in the early twentieth century, but increased in popularity throughout and in the aftermath of the First World War.⁷⁰² Before the war, one of Mary's friends Harold Large brought a medium, Mrs Herbine to Stanway where séances were organized for guests.⁷⁰³ *A Family Record* includes description of a 'dream-vision' that Mary had the night before her son's death:

I felt the stress and strain and *saw*, as if thrown on a magic-lantern sheet, a confused mass of black smoke splashed with crimson flame: it was like a child's picture of a battle or explosion. The flames and smoke were high up to the right of the picture and to the left I saw Ego standing, straight and tall. I saw him in profile, his dark eyebrows and moustache made his face look very pale. I got the impression that he was exercising all his forces with all his might and main. Round his chest was wrapped a golden banner, its colour very

⁷⁰⁰ Letter from Letty (Ego's wife) to Wemyss 3 May 1916, *ibid.*, p.375.

⁷⁰¹ Letter from Sir Walter Raleigh, *ibid.*, p.404.

⁷⁰² Jay M. Winter, 'Spiritualism and "The Lost Generation"', in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 54-77.

⁷⁰³ Wemyss, *A Family Record*, pp. 215-16.

beautiful, it swathed his body in spiral folds and seemed to protect him as he stood there with his face set and stern ... I believe that I knew, without actually realizing, that Ego was dead, and through all the days and weeks and months that followed before we got official confirmation of his death, this vision had a strangely quieting influence, it helped me to *wait* and kept me outwardly calm.⁷⁰⁴

Similarly, Mary's daughter (also called Mary) and closest in age to Yvo, recounts in a letter to her mother how she used to have childhood nightmares that Yvo had died and she would wake up crying. She saw these as a premonition of his death: "For days I simply couldn't make myself believe that it was really true that Yvo was dead, but now I feel as if I had always known and expected it, this is perhaps the meaning of those dreams I used to have as a child of his death."⁷⁰⁵ In a context in which bodies were often unidentified and lost (approximately half of those killed from the British Empire during the war have no known resting place)⁷⁰⁶ and where letters strayed, 'fictitious contact' was especially important, and not only collective memory but collective imagination kept those at the front in contact with those at home, the dead with the living.

Some echoes of this spiritualism resonate in the genealogical work of the Mormon Church. In 1918, Susa Young Gates, (daughter of Brigham Young and highly influential leader of the GSU), wrote that "vital statistics, or recorded genealogical data" are spiritually evocative because they have the power to denote character by determining "the individuality of the symbolized dead."⁷⁰⁷ In the introduction to her *Surname Book and Racial History* (1918), she wrote that "the letters of the alphabet are symbols chosen arbitrarily" and that when "a person is dead nothing remains on earth but a fleeting memory of relatives and friends, a pictured face or a stone upon a hillside, together with the collection of symbols which spell out the name and date of the deceased person."⁷⁰⁸ However, whilst recognizing the arbitrary nature of semiotics, it is as though the very fragility of the sign paradoxically makes the connection between signified and signifier, spiritually or especially otherworldly significant. She writes:

It is the data concerning any person, symbolized for us on the written page, on the tombstone, or upon the lips of some speaker, which creates in the mind the

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., p.372.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 351.

⁷⁰⁶ Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*. 2nd edn (London: SCM, 1996), p. 303.

⁷⁰⁷ Susa Young Gates, *Surname Book and Racial History* (Utah: General Board of the Relief Society, 1918), p. vi.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

image of the person thus symbolized. This data might be called, therefore, the tabernacle of the departed spirit, even as the word is the tabernacle of the thought which it embodies.⁷⁰⁹

In this way, the word or sign can be seen as a commemorative, spiritual container – a tabernacle – for the departed signified. Copies of this book were sent to every library in Europe and Gates' evocation of the departed spirit would have struck a chord in the aftermath of the First World War, when thousands of names were being commemorated in countless memorials and many families would want to connect with their lost ones.

The historian, Carolyn Steedman argues that: "If the Archive is a place of dreams, it permits this one, above all others, the one that Michelet dreamed first, of making the dead walk and talk."⁷¹⁰ The ability to transform the "dryness of dust...into a palpitating drama" of events is dependent upon the coterminous ability to record actions and speech.⁷¹¹ Arendt writes that the price for the "reification and materialization, without which no thought can become a tangible thing" is "life itself: it is always the 'dead letter' in which the 'living spirit' must survive, a deadness from which it can be rescued only when the dead letter again comes again into contact with a life willing to resurrect it, although this resurrection of the dead shares with all living things that it, too, will die again."⁷¹² There is a liminal aspect of archival material that is positioned between the life of oneself and the death of another. In the context of familial commemoration and collective mourning, archives – whether private letters, photographs, or official accounts – matter.

More cynically, the First World War has helped to create today's 'memory boom', as the *Illustrated Michelin Guides to the Battlefields*, first published in 1919 has given way to a proliferation of cultural products attractive to younger generations. Jay Winter argues that heritage sector makes money precisely because:

Today's grandparents were children after the 1914-18 war, and their stories – family stories – are now embedded in history, and fiction, and exhibitions, and museums, and pilgrimage, in all the stuff of ritual Nora considers as signs of a loss of 'true' collective memory. The linkage between the young and the old – now extended substantially with the life span – is so central to the concept of memory that it is surprising that Nora doesn't simply urge us to leave our libraries and just look around, at our own families. A vital, palpable, popular

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ Steedman, *Dust*, p. 150.

⁷¹¹ 'Preface' Hardy, *A Group of Noble Dames*.

⁷¹² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 169.

kind of collective memory is, then, alive. Its obituary, written by Nora, is premature and misleading.⁷¹³

For Pierre Nora, modernity, in the form of “democratization and mass culture on a global scale” epitomizes the encroachment or “acceleration of history” upon living memory.⁷¹⁴ Nora argues that what he terms sites of memory, or *les lieux de mémoire* are the result of such loss. Artificially and deliberately created, “museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, fraternal orders” are the “boundary stones of another age.”⁷¹⁵ Whilst they uncover the particularities of the *who* and represent “integral particularities in a society that levels particularity; signs of distinction and of group membership in a society that tends to recognize individuals only as identical and equal”, such sites of memory are only the remnants of living memory, “no longer quite life, not yet death, like shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded.” However, Nora’s elegiac and nostalgic lament for the irrevocable loss of living memory is – as Winter argues – perhaps an exaggeration. Whilst national sites of memory, like the tomb of the unknown warrior or the Cenotaph, “belongs to everyone and to no-one”, family history does belong to someone.⁷¹⁶ *A Family Record*, created in the context of the family and the ‘Souls’ group and encompassing together the memories of the three homes and evoking family rituals, perhaps is closer to a “real environment of memory”, or *milieux de mémoire*.⁷¹⁷ As such, Nora’s obituary for such *milieux de mémoire* is “premature and misleading.”⁷¹⁸

Family histories are coloured by the alienating and mass effects of war. War, especially the First World War is a common theme in family stories. Out of the forty-eight celebrities featured in series one to six of *Who Do You Think You Are?*, nine family histories featured grandfathers, great-grandfathers or great-uncles involvement in the First World War. This represents nearly nineteen per cent (18.7) of programmes from series one to six. In addition, stories of the Second World War and the Holocaust together represented nearly seventeen per cent (16.6) of programmes. The experience of war and the loss of relatives during the twentieth century, has contributed to the development of genealogical

⁷¹³ Jay M. Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 3.

⁷¹⁴ Pierre Nora, 'From between memory and history: les lieux de Mémoire', in *Theories of Memory: A Reader*, ed. by Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 144-49, pp. 144-45.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., p. 149.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., p.146.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., p. 144.

⁷¹⁸ Winter and Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, p. 3.

narratives. Genealogical narratives like Wemyss' *A Family Record* have become a means of collective memory, imagination and emotion which has an ambivalent relationship to official national archives; on the one hand national archives are needed to expose and create a shared reality, on the other hand, they highlight the limitations to which the *who* can be revealed in the public sphere. As such there is a tension between private and public memory, family history and History. Indeed, while family histories such as *A Family Record*, commemorate and mark loss and trauma, they are not empty shells of memory but are part of a living environment, a *milieux de mémoire* of familial relationships and imagined close relations that perhaps stands in contrast to more formal and official *lieux de mémoire*. It is to an examination of the dynamics of such *milieux de mémoire* and archives in the contemporary media that I shall now turn.

Who Do You Think You Are?

Today, archives are not only accessed by people through visiting an archive or through a reproduced paper copy, they can be made visible online and archival research itself has become something to televise. In recent years through the work of the *Archival Awareness Campaign*, archives, such as the TNA, have been evident in the mediascape. In particular, the British television programme *Who Do You Think You Are?* has been a huge success. Broadcast in 2004, the first series surpassed expectations when it reached an average of 4.7 million viewers, taking a nineteen per cent share of the audience. It attracted approximately over two and a half million viewers, more than average for its time slot on Tuesday BBC2 at nine pm. Since 2004, at the time of writing the programme has delivered seven series, and has filtered into other media with national and local family history events, guide books, a magazine and website. It has exported the programme format to other countries such as Australia, France, Canada, Ireland, US and Germany.⁷¹⁹ The success of the programme has also “spawned a new genre of archive-led formats, including ITV’s ‘You Don’t Know You’re Born’, and ‘Not forgotten’ (Channel 4)”, a programme about the unsung military heroes of the First World War presented by Ian Hislop.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁹ James Hibberd, 'NBC orders celeb genealogy series', *The Hollywood Reporter* (11 March 2008), <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/content_display/television/news/e3ib8b5060e33b9624e43b1e8bb77126058> [accessed 31 March 2009].

⁷²⁰ Hudson and Barratt, 'The rise and rise of family history: Jules Hudson and Nick Barratt examine why family history has become the flavour of the month, as the 'Who Do You Think You Are? Live' event at Olympia on May 5th-7th will make evident', p. 20, *Expanded Academic ASAP*.

The *Archival Awareness Campaign* team describe the influence of *Who Do You Think You Are?* as having a “major and immediate and positive impact.”⁷²¹ They reported that following the airing of the programme, physical visits to archives had increased by twenty-four per cent and new users had increased by an average of thirty-six per cent, compared to 2003. There was also an eighteen per cent increase in first-time visitors to the TNA website and twenty-nine per cent of people stated that they were prompted to ‘visit’ the TNA website after watching *Who Do You Think You Are?*.⁷²² Because of its popularity and influence, this television programme represents an important example of genealogical storytelling that warrants further study. Yet there is not enough scope within this thesis to cover all aspects of this programme. Consequently, only a couple of scenes have been chosen in order to investigate some aspects of contemporary genealogical narrative.

Episode seven of the first series traces the Jewish roots of the comedian David Baddiel.⁷²³ As part of his research into his maternal grandfather’s life, Baddiel visits Königsberg, formerly part of East Prussia, which was taken over by the Soviets after the Second World War and renamed Kaliningrad. Before the outbreak of the war his grandfather’s family owned a brick factory there. When he arrives, the city displays the bleak Soviet architecture of the communist era and is partially in ruins. In response, Baddiel states that: “Even though I know that this place was called Kaliningrad and that it had been under Soviet rule for ages I sort of expected it still to be somehow more German.” He goes on to ruminate: “I wonder how it would feel if none of this had been destroyed by the Soviets. At least I would be able to feel the nostalgia or sentiment or sentimental feeling of that’s what it was – I could touch it, I could see it.” As such, genealogical narrative is tied up with the desire to feel, to touch, to smell, and to see, and is a phenomenological project, as D. Brett explains: “History, truly considered, is a verb, not an abstract noun. We history.”⁷²⁴ The activity of doing family history can include a dialogue or encounter with archives, places and objects, where we can experience a deep affective response. This affective response – which Baddiel describes as the activities of feeling, of touching and seeing, “the nostalgia or sentiment or sentimental feeling of that’s what it was” – is what is being marketed by

⁷²¹ Archive Awareness Campaign., *Impact and Assessment and Evaluation Report* (London: AAC, March 2005) p. 24, <<http://www.ncaonline.org.uk/materials/aacevaluationreportfinal.pdf>> [accessed 10 April 2009].

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ 'Episode 7: David Baddiel', *Who Do You Think You Are?* Series 1. Dir. Reita Oor and Simon Chu. Prod. Alex Graham, Maxine Watson, and Lucy Carter. BBC/ Wall to Wall/ Acorn Media. 2004. [broadcast 23 November 2004].

⁷²⁴ D. Brett, 'The Construction of Heritage', in *Tourism in Ireland: A Critical Analysis*, ed. by Barbara O'Connor and Michael Cronin (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993), pp. 183-202, p. 186.

the heritage industry when it seeks to provide and sell the experience of walking “in the footsteps of your ancestors”.⁷²⁵ But can such experience be reliably exchanged and sold?

Certainly, the packaging of ancestral experience can be found within genealogical tourism and an important aspect of genealogical activity involves travel. Journeying is an important trope within *Who Do You Think You Are?* as the celebrity protagonist visits streets, towns, farms and cities in order to trace where their ancestors came from. As part travel programme, the viewer takes vicarious pleasure from the places visited and some enjoyment is derived from seeing the celebrity outside their familiar sphere as the uneasy wanderer. This latter figure or trope is a primordial part of our culture, as Ricoeur writes:

... placing and displacing oneself are primordial activities that make place something to be sought out ... The feeling of uneasiness – *Unheimlichkeit* – joined to the feeling of not being in one’s place, of not feeling at home, haunts us...it is always possible, often urgent, to displace oneself, with the risk of becoming that passerby, that wanderer, that flâneur, that vagabond, stray dog that our fragmented contemporary culture both sets in motion and paralyses.⁷²⁶

In this way, *Who Do You Think You Are?* can perhaps be seen as a dramatization of the alienated modern self as a perpetual tourist in search of their ‘true authentic’ past. As Dean MacCannell argues, for “moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer simpler lifestyles.” As such, genealogical tourism with its nostalgia and longing to authentically ‘experience’ the past can be seen to be “components of the conquering spirit of modernity – the grounds of its unifying consciousness.”⁷²⁷

Place is an important component in genealogical narrative. Like Hardy’s “Towns-end” cottages, Basu writes that:

Places help to recall stories that are associated with them, and places exist (as named locales) by virtue of their emplotment in a narrative. Places, like persons, have biographies inasmuch as they are formed, used and transformed in relation to practice. It can be argued that stories acquire part of their mythic value and historical relevance if they are rooted in the concrete details of

⁷²⁵ Homecoming Scotland., *Your Detailed Itinerary: Come Walk in the Footsteps of Your Ancestors*, (VisitScotland, 2009) <http://www.visitbritain.no/Images/VSHomecomingAncestry_ENGLR_tcm37-147414.pdf> [accessed 19 July 2009].

⁷²⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 149.

⁷²⁷ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 3.

locales in the landscape, acquiring material reference points that can be visited, seen and touched.⁷²⁸

In a similar vein, Ricoeur argues that geographical space and historical time cannot be articulated from each other.⁷²⁹ He writes:

Each new building is inscribed in urban space like a narrative within a setting of intertextuality ... A city brings together in the same space different ages, offering to our gaze a sedimented history of tastes and cultural forms. The city gives itself as both to be seen and to be read.⁷³⁰

However, for Baddiel, there are hardly any tangible marks of Königsberg that can be read within Kaliningrad, he is not able to time travel, even in his imagination. For Baddiel, as for many other celebrities in the programme, such as Esther Rantzen, who visited the place where an eighteenth-century Jewish district of Warsaw used to be and found only a car park, often places are sites of violent loss and banal obliteration, forming a stark modern background for one's story in which the struggle to tell the story becomes a metaphor for the struggle to survive.⁷³¹

Despite the difficulties of reading Kaliningrad as German, and his uneasiness as an outsider, Baddiel does take the number four tram, which is the same tram journey his grandfather Ernst Fabian would have taken everyday from home to work. Baddiel's tram journey can be seen as a re-enactment of the trace. Ricoeur writes that the trace combines the notion of a dynamic trajectory and a static mark; a trace both "indicates 'here' (in space) and 'now' (in the present), the past passage of living beings" and also has a "thing-like" aspect about it that connects the "marking thing to the marked thing". Ricoeur writes that a trace is a:

... sign-effect ... On the one hand, to follow a trace is to reason by means of causality about the chain of operations constitutive of the action of passing by. On the other hand, to return from the mark to the thing that made it is to

⁷²⁸ Paul Basu, 'Sites of memory - Sources of identity: landscape-narrative of the Sutherland Clearances', in *Townships to Farmsteads: Rural Settlement Studies in Scotland, England and Wales*, ed. by John A. Atkinson, Iain Banks, and Gavin MacGregor (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2000), pp. 225-36, p. 226.

⁷²⁹ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 146.

⁷³⁰ Ibid. pp. 150-151

⁷³¹ 'Episode 4: Esther Rantzen', *Who Do You Think You Are?* Series 5. Dir. Reita Oor and Simon Chu. Prod. Alex Graham, Maxine Watson, and Lucy Carter. BBC/Wall to Wall. 2008. [broadcast 3 September 2008].

isolate, among all the possible causal chains, the ones that also carry the significance belonging to the relationship of vestige to passage.⁷³²

While Ernst Fabian has not directly marked his commute, Baddiel is able to retrace his journey from a document he inherited amongst a suitcase of papers which gave the addresses of his Grandfather's home and his place of work. By virtue of Ernst Fabian having been there and taken that journey, the documentary traces of Baddiel's family history includes the city of Königsberg/Kaliningrad itself and its tram lines as well as the family documents. Baddiel's journey is a kind of embodiment of the trace – a retracing of the past which has the commemorative and reflective character of a pilgrimage. This latter term resonates with many travellers' desire for authenticity. Many 'genealogical tourists' would object to the label 'tourist' and would prefer to be termed as 'pilgrims'. Celeste Ray has found that Scottish Americans "refer to their own journeys to Scotland as 'pilgrimages' – not the individualistic pilgrimage of finding oneself, but that of finding one's 'people' and one's 'place.'"⁷³³

While he is on the tram, Baddiel imagines his grandfather taking the same journey and contemplates the contrast between this individual routine and the historical events going on 'outside':

There is something, I suppose, quite poignant about the idea that it's a very straight line that he would have taken every day, exactly the same line or whatever, and the world would have been changing around him, you know, and I wonder how it would have felt doing something so routine and watching swastikas going up and seeing your place of work being so eradicated and yet you're taking the same tram line everyday.

There seem to be several temporal layers at work in this retracing. Firstly, there is the routine trajectory of an individual person, the everyday routine time of work and labour; the repeated clock time of the journey itself and the lived primal experience. These everyday experiences of time are contrasted with a second sense of time of historical events – the external events that Baddiel envisions as taking place outside the tram and outside the interiority of his grandfather's life. These historical events only reached their full signifying force in the ironic retelling of history. Ernst Fabian would not have known that the anti-Semitism he personally experienced in the 1930s – the putting up of swastikas and the eradication of his business – would figure as part of a larger historical event played

⁷³² Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*. trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 120.

⁷³³ R. Celeste Ray, *Highland Heritage: Scottish Americans in the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 133.

on the world's stage: the Second World War and the Holocaust. These two senses of time – the everyday routine framed within the historical – also raise questions concerning personal agency, survival and destiny. The routine tram journey, the repetition of the straight line, implies a mundane fixity that is tied up with everyday work and production. Whilst the viewer and Baddiel know that Fabian was lucky enough to gain the capital and connections that would bring him, his wife and daughter to Britain, it cannot be taken for granted that Fabian would have been able to free himself from the routine trajectory of his everyday life and the historical events that would threaten to engulf his livelihood and his personal existence.

Another sense of time is generational; Ernst Fabian is separated from Baddiel by two generations. Ricoeur writes that “the replacement of the generations underlies in one way or another historical continuity and the rhythm of tradition and innovation.”⁷³⁴ This sense of time is relational and can be grasped through the extension of kinship. Françoise Zonabend, in her ethnographic study of a French village, notes how there existed within the community at Minot a “time of the family” which was “measured by the extent of family relationships and by the events that mark out a lifetime.”⁷³⁵ She describes every person known by their family name in the community as being:

... fixed in a genealogical network in space and time, where past and present, kindred and community are intermingled. Each individual is set first and foremost in a time determined through the family. It is a time that is both precise and vague according to whether the near generations are recalled, i.e. three above ego or two below – or whether there is a plunge into the almost mythical depths, where the name itself is the only reference point.⁷³⁶

Whilst as viewers, we perhaps do not exist in a comparable *Gemeinschaft* model of community depicted at Minot, and even if we are not of the same generation as Ernst Fabian, we know or can imagine having a grandfather who would have been a contemporary of his. Therefore, we can work out our relative distance to his life and the historical events that engulfed him. Similarly, Baddiel might represent for the viewer a contemporary, who has “been exposed to the same influences and marked by the same events and changes” and can hence be seen to be part of the same contemporaneous generation to the viewer.⁷³⁷ Or Baddiel might represent the successive generation. While

⁷³⁴ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, p. 110. Vol. 3.

⁷³⁵ Françoise Zonabend, *The Enduring Memory: Time and History in a French Village*. trans. Anthony Forster (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. x.

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁷³⁷ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, p. 111. Vol. 3.

our family stories may not be marked by the similar narratives of exile and anti-Semitism, we can still posit a notion of a generation that probably would have been affected in some way by the Second World War, creating a kind of anonymous sequential generational “community of time.”⁷³⁸ Such generational repositioning of our understanding and relation to historical time is observed by Baddiel:

When I was a child, all that stuff [the Second World War and the Holocaust] seemed to have happened a long time ago. But the war had ended only 20 years before I was born. Now I’m 42, I can see how short a time span that is, and how close I am in time to people whose lives were lived under such terrible threat.⁷³⁹

In this way, family history can be seen to provide a connecting sense of generational time that forms, in Ricoeur’s words, a bridge “constructed between the historical past and memory by ancestral narrative that serves as a relay station for memory directed to the historical past, conceived of as the time of people now dead and time before my birth.”⁷⁴⁰

Finally, there is a kind of suspended theatrical or narrative time of the programme itself. Baddiel’s tram journey is not only overlaid with the imaginative reconstruction of his grandfather’s life and the teleology of the Second World War, but is further framed within the context of a carefully edited hour-long television programme, which in turn has its own didactic and autonomous narrator, who condenses these different conceptions of time into one coherent narrative. The very neatness and profoundness of the programme belies the painstaking research, dead-ends and technical expertise that went into its making. This represents another layer of theatrical space and time in which memory and identification processes are enacted and unified.

Within this theatre, archival material – typically photography – has its own visual and temporal language. One of the most common techniques of using archival images in television programmes is the ‘Ken Burns effect’, which has arguably become a token of archival authenticity. This technique includes slowly panning from one archival image, to another and zooming in or tilting the camera to guide the eye to areas of interest. The effect is named after the American television documentary maker, Kenneth Lauren Burns, (b.1953), who, while he did not pioneer the technique, used it extensively in his lengthy documentary series, *The Civil War* (1990). This programme included thousands of sepia-

⁷³⁸ Ibid.p.113

⁷³⁹ John Naish, 'Lost generations game - Interview', *The Times*, 4 November 2006, p. 6.

⁷⁴⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, p.114

toned photographs and personal stories which were accompanied by wistful and evocative American folk music.

The term became widespread when Apple Macintosh created the 'Ken Burns Effect' as an application in its iMovie software. While it can be argued that the Internet and the use of the personal computer allows for the individual creation of 'memory' artefacts, it is significant that the techniques conform to the generic conventions of how 'authentic' archival memory is rendered. From the Claude glass that turned landscapes into picturesque old masters to an American patented IT "system and method for enriching memories and enhancing emotions about a specific personal event,"⁷⁴¹ the visual eye of the spectator has been taught through the technologies of art, the camera, film, television and information technology what 'the past' looks like. Furthermore, it has been taught not only how to 'see' the past but how to feel, imagine, touch and taste it too. It is these technological and cultural elements that can be taken as the theatrical element of memory and, in turn, as informing or shaping forces enacted within the processes of identification. In this way, 'authenticity' becomes a matter of technique and performance. Yet this is not to say that objects and fabrications are separate from us, as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton argue: "Things embody goals, make skills manifest, and shape the identities of their users. Man is ... *homo faber*, the maker and user of objects, his self to a large extent a reflection of the things with which he interacts. Thus objects also make and use their makers and users."⁷⁴²

Such interaction between object, user and narrative can be seen in episode three of series two, which features the family history of comedian, Stephen Fry.⁷⁴³ Before Fry sets off on his journey to discover more about his grandfather's family, he visits his parents and looks at the family photographs with them. One photograph depicts his great-aunt, her husband and children. While looking at it with his mother, he recalls seeing the photograph for the first time with his mother as a child. Pierre Bourdieu in his study of the use of family photographs notes how they were often used primarily by mothers as a form of introduction and recognition to teach their children about their relatives who often live far away:

⁷⁴¹ *System and method for enriching memories and enhancing emotions around specific personal events in the form of images, illustrations, audio, video and/or data* (<<http://www.freepatentsonline.com/y2007/0016864.html>> [accessed 11 March 2008].

⁷⁴² Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 1.

⁷⁴³ 'Episode 3: Stephen Fry', *Who Do You Think You Are?* . Series Two. Dir. Reita Oord and Simon Chu. Prod. Alex Graham, Maxine Watson, and Lucy Carter. BBC/ Wall to Wall/ Acorn Media. 2006. [broadcast 25 January 2006].

A methodical inspection and a prolonged observation are conducted, in terms of the very logic that dominates the knowledge of other people in everyday life: by means of a comparison of fragments of knowledge and experiences, each person is located with reference to his or her family line, and the reading of old marriage photographs often takes the form of a course in genealogical science, in which the mother, a specialist in the subject, teaches the child about the connections which bind him or her to each of the people shown.⁷⁴⁴

Bourdieu's 1960s study is corroborated by Gillian Rose, who found when interviewing English middle-class women, that "the mums I talked with showed family photos to their young children and babies in order to teach them who was who in their family, and all were delighted when their children could put names to the faces in the photos."⁷⁴⁵ In this way, the photograph binds the family together to create an imagined collective memory and identity. In the programme, once again Fry is receiving this genealogical lesson from his mother and the television audience vicariously also takes part in this process. We learn, and Fry is reminded once again, that it is a photograph of his grandfather's sister or his mother's father's sister, her husband and their three children who lived in Surany, Hungary. Amidst the mechanization and reproductive framing of images through the photograph and the television programme, is a doubling of the personal domestic scene: the family in the photograph and the family looking at the photograph. Like the Wemyss' "Four Generations" photograph, the image has become:

... a ritual of the domestic cult in which the family is both subject and object, because it expresses the celebratory sense which the family group gives to itself, and which it reinforces by giving it expression, the need for photographs and the need to take photographs (the internalization of the social function of this practice) are felt all the more intensely the more integrated the group and the more the group is captured at a moment of its highest integration.⁷⁴⁶

To some extent, celebrities and recognized public figures, such as Baddiel and Fry, represent a kind of extended kinship network for the viewer, a quasi-imagined network of distant relatives who regularly enter the domestic living room through the medium of the television set, a bit like soap opera characters. *Who Do You Think You Are?* owes its success to its use of well-known celebrities. Hudson and Barratt describe how "for decades it [was] a struggle to turn family history into a workable format for broadcast," mainly because they argue, "despite the popularity of family history, most of our discoveries only

⁷⁴⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-brow Art*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), pp. 22-23.

⁷⁴⁵ Gillian Rose, 'Family photographs and domestic spacings: a case study', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 28:1 (2003), 5-18, p. 10.

⁷⁴⁶ Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-brow Art*, p. 19.

interest ourselves and our immediate family.”⁷⁴⁷ In this way, the enactment of celebrity image identification through television broadcast parallels the way in which the photograph functions in Fry’s family: both images are social objects that integrate groups through a process of familiarisation. We watch because to some extent, Fry is part of our extended imagined ‘family’, a common frame of reference that can enable strangers to converse, share feelings and to relate on an informal level.⁷⁴⁸ This ‘family’ of celebrity figures are shown as one ‘family tree’ in the graphics during the credits to the programme as each branch links one celebrity to another and one episode to another. In its cultivation of an intimate narrative voice which connects the celebrity with the viewer, *Who Do You Think You Are?* can also be seen as an extension of the BBC’s creation of “mass, British, middle-brow culture”, where the viewer is flattered into getting to know the celebrity and where the viewer becomes familiar with the celebrity, thereby structuring ordinariness, as Simon Frith writes: “Ordinariness became the measure of authenticity, [it] confirmed listeners’ sense of belonging.”⁷⁴⁹

In this way, celebrities can be seen as kind of ‘close relation’ situated somewhere between the imagined national ‘family’ and one’s private family. Ricoeur argues that the concept of close relations can form a midway point of distinct memory that dissolves the polarity between individual and collective memory. Working with the “hypothesis of the threefold attribution of memory: to oneself, to one’s close relations, and to others”, Ricoeur argues that close relations add a:

... special note concerning the two ‘events’ that limit a human life, birth and death ... both of them interest society only in terms of public records and from the demographic point of view of the replacement of generations. But both events were, or will be, of importance to my close relations ... What I expect from my close relations is that they approve of what I attest: that I am able to speak, act, recount, impute to myself the responsibility for my actions ... In my turn, I include among my close relations those who disapprove of my actions, but not of my existence.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁷ Hudson and Barratt, 'The rise and rise of family history: Jules Hudson and Nick Barratt examine why family history has become the flavour of the month, as the 'Who Do You Think You Are? Live' event at Olympia on May 5th-7th will make evident', p. 20, *Expanded Academic ASAP*.

⁷⁴⁸ Kenneth J. Gergen argues that the contemporary self in Western society has become “saturated” through the increased scale and speed of information and images, by other “social ghosts,” real and imagined. He argues that this is so much the case that we have “become pastiches, imitative assemblages of each other”, who “harbour a vast population of hidden potentials”. Kenneth J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* ([New York]: BasicBooks, 1991), pp. 56,71.

⁷⁴⁹ Simon Frith, 'The Pleasures of the Hearth: The making of BBC light entertainment', in *Formations of Pleasure*, ed. by Tony Bennett (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 101-23, pp. 120,22.

⁷⁵⁰ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 132.

It is perhaps in this attribution of memory to one's close relations that Ricoeur echoes Taylor's notion of a "community of interlocutors."⁷⁵¹ Individual memory may be dismissed as psychologism, but surely there is a value and strength in the memory of 'close relations' and interlocution that has an ethical dimension which cannot be totally dismissed.⁷⁵²

Tamara K. Harevan writes that a "sense of history does not depend on the depth of generational memory, but identity and consciousness do, because they rest on the linkage of the individual's life history and family history with specific historical moments."⁷⁵³ It is perhaps through the community of 'close relations' and interlocution that history begins to matter. In this way, the events of the Second World War become personalized through the celebrity, who represents for the viewer a kind of 'close relation', bringing the viewer into an imagined community of generational time.

Yet it is not always the case that photographs provide recognition and integration – often there is a discrepancy between image and narrative. In Fry's case the family photograph evokes a loss of familial integration. Not only are these people distanced by time and geography: their narrative is also violently truncated. It is significant that Fry does not know their names and that his mother does not want to talk about them. The original lesson that Fry recalls is that his mother became upset and would say nothing more other than they had been "killed by Hitler." On one level, the project of the television programme is a response to this violent end of life and narrative through the creation of more narrative. Here, there is an ethical compulsion in the creation of narrative and indebtedness towards the dead. Ricoeur argues that the small, individual stories are not ethically bankrupt – they are neglected and call out for narrative, they are related to grief. He writes:

We tell stories because in the last analysis human lives need and merit being narrated. This remark takes on its full force when we refer to the necessity to save the history of the defeated and the lost. The whole history of suffering cries out for vengeance and calls for narrative.⁷⁵⁴

The history of the Holocaust is well-known, yet perhaps there is another sense in which the personal individual story is extra significant within this context. Fry remembers imagining the narrative of "Hitler killed them" as a child. He recalls picturing in his imagination a man with a funny moustache murdering them with a gun. However, he knows now that the mechanics of the violence was not proximate and personal: it was industrialized, distal,

⁷⁵¹ Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, pp. 27-31.

⁷⁵² Hunt, 'Plenary 3: Social History and Television'.

⁷⁵³ Tamara K. Harevan, 'The Search for Generational Memory: Tribal Rites in Industrial Society', *Daedalus*, 107 (1978), 137-49, p. 137.

⁷⁵⁴ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol.1, p.75

anonymous and full scale. In their anonymity and in their removal from the rest of society to the concentration camps, it was intended that his family would be denied the chance of becoming heroic in their death, of being remembered in the public sphere.⁷⁵⁵ In relation to the Holocaust, scale and proximity takes on an ethical and political dimension.

Consequently, a binary opposition has been formed along ethical grounds as history implies distance and memory implies intimacy. This distinction can be seen in the novel *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels, when the narrator remarks that:

History is amoral: events occurred. But memory is moral; what we consciously remember is what our conscience remembers. History is the Totenbuch, the Book of the Dead, kept by the administrators of the camps. Memory is the Memorbuch, the names of those to be mourned, read aloud in the synagogue. History and memory share events; that is, they share time and space. Every moment is two moments.⁷⁵⁶

The objective distancing of history and of archival recording becomes ethically suspect to the extent to which it is associated with distancing state mechanisms and administrative anonymity.

Jacques Derrida argues that this violence is embedded in the etymological origins of the term 'archive' as the house of the magistrate and consequently a "science of the archive must include the theory of ... institutionalization, that is to say, the theory both of the law which begins by inscribing itself there and of the right which authorizes it."⁷⁵⁷ This *archiviolithic* aspect can be seen within the historiography of the Holocaust itself.⁷⁵⁸

Addressing the World Congress on Records in 1980, organized by the GSU, Arthur Kurzweil argued that:

If we allow the murders of our people to be 'written up' in the history books, to be put on a shelf for future reference, we will be helping to forget. It is incumbent upon us to remember. As Jews, we are a people of memory, a people whose history should be part of each of us. We cannot let the Holocaust become just another subject for books and articles and for nameless monuments in cemeteries ... We have to make a personal connection with the Holocaust ... We must know their names and their fates ... There are no

⁷⁵⁵ Hannah Arendt, 'Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps', *Jewish Social Studies*, 12 (1950), 49-64, pp. 60-61.

⁷⁵⁶ Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), p. 138.

⁷⁵⁷ Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, p. 4.

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.10.

gravestones for them. Our knowledge of them might be their finest memorial.⁷⁵⁹

In this respect, genealogical data is not just 'raw' information; neither is it wholly an institutional mechanism for the final solution or for the verification of Aryan descent. It also has a symbolic potential for personal memorialisation that resonates within Judeo-Christian culture. At one point in the programme, Fry looks up information about his relatives on a database. The database would not typically be thought to have a tangible 'aura' in the way that a discrete fetish object, such as a lock of hair, or a photograph would have; yet this moment of recognition is powerfully emotive. Whilst Fry did not personally meet these relatives, and whilst he 'knows' that they were killed in concentration camps, the process of typing in the names of his relatives and the computer recall of the name and the reply of "Auschwitz" becomes a stark moment of recognition and grief. In reaching out to find his relatives, he is touched deeply in response.

Within historiography there has been a critique of the positivist interpretation of documents which has been accompanied by new scholarly activity based on the scientific use of data. However, as Ricoeur warns: "As soon as the idea of a debt to the dead, to people of flesh and blood to whom something really happened in the past, stops giving documentary research its highest end, history loses its meaning."⁷⁶⁰ Could it be that part of meaning of family history is to mourn, to make knowledge a memorial? Does Fry's encounter with the computerized verification uncover a different level of 'knowing' or grasping? Drawing upon Kant's distinction between *Vernunft* (reason) and *Verstand* (understanding), Arendt argues that these coincide with different mental activities, thinking and knowing, which correlates with two different concerns, meaning and cognition, where "thinking is to meaning what knowing is to cognition."⁷⁶¹ On these terms, the knowledge and memory that Kurzweil writes of, could be a thinking activity which represents a quest for meaning, whereby we "come to terms with, reconcile ourselves with reality, that is, try to be at home in the world."⁷⁶² In this way, family history is sometimes distinct from the activities of verifying or collating information, or the development of historical knowledge, it might be a more existential vehicle for understanding, an "attempt to reconcile the world to us and us to the world."⁷⁶³ This is perhaps the reason why Fry cries, even though he already

⁷⁵⁹ Arthur Kurzweil, 'The Holocaust and Family History', *World Conference on Records: Preserving Our Heritage, August 12-15* (GSU: Salt Lake City, Utah, 1980), p. 3.

⁷⁶⁰ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, p. 118.vol 3.

⁷⁶¹ Patricia Bowen-Moore, *Hannah Arendt's Philosophy of Natality* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 78.

⁷⁶² Hannah Arendt cited by Ibid., p. 79.

⁷⁶³ Ibid., p.79.

‘knew’ that his relatives had died in concentration camps, he is perhaps crying because he is attempting to reconcile himself with a world in which such things happened. Or perhaps for Fry, it is more an adult grasping of the world, an immediate affective encounter.

On one level, by rendering archival objects as a nostalgic spectacle and by dramatizing the ease by which archival institutions can not only reveal but also evoke people now dead, *Who Do You Think You Are?* refigures both the archive and the user’s relationship to it: the archive has become a place of desire and consumption, a theatre of identification. Yet as a theatrical display of genealogical discovery it is more than a vehicle for self-help and more than mere entertainment. As a theatrical technology it provides a social function in not only creating a sense of belonging amongst the protagonists’ families, but also creating a community of viewers through revealing the selfhood (*ipse*) and sameness (*idem*)-identity of celebrities. In its use of archives, documents and traces and in its employment of generational time, the programme performs a social and commemorative function which goes beyond the traditional use of the archive. In this way, programmes such as *Who Do You Think You Are?* challenge the traditional definition of the archive not only in the materials and topics traditionally considered to be evidential or historical but also its very function. The archive has become a theatre of meaning, memory and self-identity.

Roots: an epic quest

The promise of ‘finding oneself’ through family history, was one that did not begin with *Who Do You Think You Are?*, but with one of the most influential genealogical narratives of the twentieth century, namely Alex Haley’s *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976). *Roots* is a family saga that tells the story of seven generations of Haley’s family on his mother’s side, from Kunta Kinte, a Mandinka boy from Gambia who was abducted by slavers in 1767, through Kunta’s daughter Kizzy, who, after being raped by her slave owner, Tom Lea, gives birth to ‘Chicken George’, to his son, Tom, whose youngest daughter, Cynthia, gave birth to Haley’s mother. The first four hundred pages or so of narrative principally focus on Kunta Kinte’s life, his childhood and manhood training in Africa, his capture, experience of the middle passage and his life as a slave. As time goes on the family history is telescoped into fewer and fewer pages. The significance of *Roots* lies in the last thirty pages, where Haley describes his research into his family history, making *Roots* “a story of a story.”⁷⁶⁴ Fed on the oral histories of his elderly aunts on the porch, Haley heard about the “African” who called a guitar a “ko”, and a river “kamby

⁷⁶⁴ James A. Hijiya, 'Roots: Family and Ethnicity in the 1970s', *American Quarterly*, 30:4 (1978), 548-56, p. 549.

bolongo”. Using these words and supposedly based on twelve years of “the deepest, strictest, most honest research”, Haley traced his family to the Gambian village of Juffure, where a *griot* confirmed the story about a boy from the Kinte clan – identified by Haley as Kunta – who went to chop wood and was abducted by slavers.⁷⁶⁵ It was this discovery that led to the writing of *Roots* and furnished it with its unique selling point, which was that “for the first time a black American has actually succeeded in tracing his genealogy back to a specific African ancestor and to a specific ancestral village”.⁷⁶⁶

Largely ignored by literary critics, because of its “damnably righteous *Reader’s Digest* middle-brow” status, most criticism of *Roots* has concentrated on its historical inaccuracies.⁷⁶⁷ Haley described *Roots* as a kind of “faction”, defined by *The Popular Press’ New Dictionary of Black History* as a “literary social-document based upon exhaustive research and characterized by the presentation of historical fact through the medium of fictionalized dialog.”⁷⁶⁸ One of the first critics to challenge the factual basis of the work was the British journalist, Mark Ottoway who questioned the reliability of Haley’s African source, the *griot*, Kebba Kanga Fofana. A written deposition of Fofana’s oral history deposited with the Gambian national archivist, Bakary Sidibe, directly contradicted events depicted in *Roots*. While in *Roots* the date of Kinte’s abduction and transportation to America is cited as 1767, the evidence of Fofana and other village testimony claimed that Kinte was held in the fort at James Island for seven years until 1773 or 1774.⁷⁶⁹ Other criticism focused upon Haley’s idealistic description of Juffure, which is depicted as an Eden-like ahistorical realm. According to David A. Gerber, eighteenth-century Juffure was “in the center of one of the region’s most lucrative and well-established Afro-European trading networks” and the year of Kinte’s kidnapping, 1767, would have taken place during the Anglo-Noni War.⁷⁷⁰ Ottoway also claimed that during this period Juffure was under the jurisdiction of the King of Barra and accordingly the

⁷⁶⁵ PHS., 'The Times Diary: Sticking pins into a best-seller', *The Times*, 12 April 1977, p. 12.

⁷⁶⁶ Mark Ottoway, 'Doubts raised over story of the big TV slave saga: Tangled Roots', *The Sunday Times*, 10 April 1977, pp. 1,17,21, p. 17.

⁷⁶⁷ Philip Nobile, 'Alex Haley’s Advice to Ambrose and Goodwin', *History News Network* (1 January 2002), <<http://hnn.us/articles/539.html>> [accessed 15 September 2006].

⁷⁶⁸ *The Popular Press’ New Dictionary of Black History* cited by Gary B. Mills and Elizabeth Shown Mills, 'Roots and the new “Faction”: A Legitimate Tool for Clio?', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 89:1 (1981), 3-26, p. 3.

⁷⁶⁹ Gerber, 'Haley's *Roots* and our own: An Inquiry into the Nature of a Popular Phenomenon', p. 96; Ottoway, 'Doubts raised over story of the big TV slave saga: Tangled Roots'.

⁷⁷⁰ Gerber, 'Haley's *Roots* and our own: An Inquiry into the Nature of a Popular Phenomenon', p. 99.

British were forbidden to take any slaves and there would have been serious consequences had they done so.⁷⁷¹

While the historical accuracy of the African section of the book has been seriously questioned, *Roots* was still believed to be based on Haley's American family history. However, the work is not even verifiable from a genealogical point of view. The documentary evidence for Haley's family and its various connections with the Lea and Murray plantations are contradictory. Dates do not add up, births, marriages and deaths are misaligned. For example, there is documentary evidence that the slave 'Toby', who was owned by a Waller and was identified as Kunta Kinte by Haley, appeared in six separate documents that dated up to four years prior to when Kinte was thought to arrive in America aboard the *Lord Ligonier*.⁷⁷² Accordingly, as Gary B. Mills and Elizabeth Shown Mills have cogently argued, *Roots* does not qualify as a family history. As such, it is highly problematic. It is not literary enough to be 'literature', not historical enough to be history, and even on the grounds of family history it is unreliable.

The fact that Haley's journey into his family history was inauthentic represents for readers in Moore's words, "less a fiction than a betrayal."⁷⁷³ This is because the significance of *Roots* lies in its claim to be an authentic revelation of Haley's family history and it was this story – the story of Haley's research – that he told repeatedly on campuses, to journalists and to radio and television interviewers. Haley's story had all "the obligatory ingredients" for someone who described himself as the "conduit" of the back-to-Africa movement: "fearful odds (penury and the perplexing nature of his task), dramatic suffering gladly undergone (nights spent lying on a wooden board in the hold of a freighter), divine intervention at a moment of despair (the voices of his ancestors urging him to complete the task) and exaltation (in the bosom of the tribe) in his hour of triumph."⁷⁷⁴ Helen Taylor argues that this story of Haley's search for his roots, with its "extravagant amounts of international travel, false trails, sudden revelations, self dramatising epiphanies and moments of profound despair and great euphoria, itself constitutes a modern epic tale."⁷⁷⁵ It is through these acts of storytelling, she contends that "Haley *himself* came the closest

⁷⁷¹ Ottoway, 'Doubts raised over story of the big TV slave saga: Tangled Roots', p. 17.

⁷⁷² Gary B. Mills and Elizabeth Shown Mills, "'Roots' and the New 'Faction': A Legitimate Tool for Clio?", *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 89:1 (1981), 3-26, p. 9.

⁷⁷³ Moore, 'Routes: Alex Haley's *Roots* and the Rhetoric of Genealogy', p. 9.

⁷⁷⁴ Michael Church, 'The genealogy experience: Roots/Parkinson and the Roots Phenomenon BBC 1', *The Times*, 9 April 1977, p. 12.

⁷⁷⁵ Taylor, 'The Griot from Tennessee': The saga of Alex Haley's *Roots*', p. 59.

anyone has ever come to being an African-American griot.”⁷⁷⁶ Certainly, the tale of Haley’s achievement – while false – has proved to be a powerful contemporary myth. As Moore writes: “*Roots* tells its readers of the ultimate origin in general, the source, the root, the *terminus ante quem*: who you really are. Perhaps no image of identity is more compelling in the present age.”⁷⁷⁷

Roots’ appeal has been analysed from a sociological point of view. James A. Hijiya has interpreted the power of *Roots* as symptomatic of a larger move towards the family and almost as an anti-American “partial retreat from idealized self-made man.”⁷⁷⁸ Gerber saw *Roots*, with its tale of family survival and triumph, as a particularly attractive text in a period that placed added social and economic strains on the traditional family unit. He also interpreted its popularity amongst the white population as symptomatic of the growing “new white ethnic movement” epitomized by Michael Novak’s *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the Seventies* (1972), which argued that American groups remained essentially distinct in their ethnicity.⁷⁷⁹ Such critiques go some way to explaining *Roots*’ popularity amongst whites and indeed the popularity of genealogy in general. In this way, *Roots* can be read as an endorsement of conservative family values and for demonstrating that everyone and anyone can become dignified through the reclamation of their genealogical heritage.

Yet *Roots* needs to be read within the context of white supremacy – as mentioned in Chapter Two, in late nineteenth-century America there was no place for Indians or slaves in the compilation of *American Ancestry* (1887). Within the context of public broadcasting, national identity and culture was based upon racial lines. The BBC adaptation of Galsworthy’s, *Forsyte Saga* was exported from the ‘motherland’ to the American ‘colonies’ as part of a new national programme funded by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and the Ford Foundation in 1969. This programming initiative was preceded by the Public Broadcasting Laboratory (PBL) that had been formed in the wake of the social unrests of 1967 in order to address the issue of race relations. The *Forsyte Saga* followed the PBL initiative and together with another BBC import – Kenneth Clark’s *Civilization* – paved the way for *Masterpiece Theater* in the 1970s. Douglas M. Haynes argues that the

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 58.

⁷⁷⁷ Moore, 'Routes: Alex Haley's *Roots* and the Rhetoric of Genealogy', p. 14.

⁷⁷⁸ Hijiya, 'Roots: Family and Ethnicity in the 1970s', p. 549.

⁷⁷⁹ Gerber, 'Haley's *Roots* and our own: An Inquiry into the Nature of a Popular Phenomenon', p. 106.

adoption of these programmes privileged the whiteness of culture and perpetuated the myth that the best 'cultural heritage' was essentially white and implicitly European.⁷⁸⁰

By contrast, *Roots* offered a different cultural genealogy, one that significantly did not begin with slavery but began with a rich – if highly idealized – depiction of the African culture, as Haley argued: "I, we, need a place called Eden. My people need a Pilgrim's Rock."⁷⁸¹ Before writing *Roots*, Haley wrote *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and it was through this contact with Malcolm X that Haley was inspired to carry out his family history. Following the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, X argued that the "devil white man" had cut black people "off from all knowledge of their own kind, and cut them off from any knowledge of their own language, religion, and past culture, until the black man in America was the earth's only race of people who had absolutely no knowledge of his true identity."⁷⁸² Because "a Negro in America can never know his true family name, or even what tribe he was descended from", followers of Mohammed adopted the surname "X" to symbolize "the true African family name that he never could know." As X explained:

For me, my 'X' replaced the white slavemaster name of 'Little' which some blue-eyed devil named Little had imposed upon my paternal forebears. The receipt of my 'X' meant forever after in the nation of Islam, I would be known as Malcolm X. Mr Muhammad taught that we would keep this 'X' until God Himself returned and gave us a Holy Name from His own mouth.⁷⁸³

Unlike X, Haley realized that he did know his African ancestor's name and, according to the dramatization of *Roots: The Next Generations*, it was this realization that set him upon his genealogical quest.⁷⁸⁴ While X counteracted the violent origins of his surname through the adoption of Islam and his 'X', Haley used genealogy as a kind of mask for his political appellation as a 'Kinte'. Indeed there are similarities between X and Kinte. Like X, Kinte is a strict Muslim and proudly refuses to adopt the Christianity of his fellow slaves. He does not seek to integrate with the slave community because he views them as shamefully Americanized and alienated from their African heritage. Similarly, like X, Kinte remains

⁷⁸⁰ Douglas M. Haynes, 'The Whiteness of *Civilization*: The Transatlantic Crisis of White Supremacy and British Television Programming in the United States in the 1970s', in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and Through the Nation*, ed. by Antoinette M. Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 324-41, p. 335.

⁷⁸¹ Ottoway, 'Doubts raised over story of the big TV slave saga: Tangled Roots', p. 17.

⁷⁸² Alex Haley and Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (London: Penguin, 1966), p. 256.

⁷⁸³ Ibid., p. 296.

⁷⁸⁴ 'Episode 7', *Roots: The Next Generations*. Dir. John Erman and Georg Stanford Brown. Prod. David L. Wolper. ABC. 1979.

celibate until marriage. As Gerber writes: “the lives of both Kunta Kinte and Malcolm X have filled a powerful emotional need for inspiring models of strength, dignity, and self-creation in a hostile or, at best, indifferent White world.”⁷⁸⁵ In this way, *Roots* became Haley’s vehicle for taking a stand; it made him simultaneously a successful and professional writer and a descendant of Kunta Kinte and all the values he stood for.

Rather than viewing *Roots* as a hermetically sealed text, it is perhaps best understood in its reception and its power to ‘father-forth’ or re-configure the world. It is in this metaphorical sense that *Roots* is genealogical. As Edward Said writes: “if narrative is to be mimetic as well as productive, it also must be able to repeat as well as record the ‘fathering-forth’, the ‘over-and-overings....of human life, the essence and image of which are biological self-perpetuation and unfolding genealogy.’”⁷⁸⁶ Through metaphor, the literary act is rendered as a reflection of biological procreation. Controversially, the worth of *Roots* perhaps does not lie in its truthfulness or in Haley discovering his genealogical identity but rather in its relevance and “pertinence by readers poised on the edge of a world yet to be.”⁷⁸⁷ Thirty years later, the British actor and playwright, Kwame Kwei-Armah recalled the impact of the television programme. He was inspired to find his ancestral name from watching *Roots*:

By the end of the series I had told my mother that I would one day trace my heritage back to Africa and reclaim an ancestral name. Before I watched the programme I was called Ian Roberts but now my name is Kwame Kwei-Armah.⁷⁸⁸

In this way, the story of *Roots* has not only ‘fathered-forth’ in the interviews and lectures delivered by Haley, in the novel and the television series, but it has also formed the pattern for others to find their ‘roots’, and ‘given birth’ to new identities and actions.

Another example of *Roots*’ influence can be seen in Barack Obama’s, *Dreams from my Father*. In this autobiographical work Obama describes his search for his estranged Kenyan father and his own identity, the narrative of which climaxes with a trip to Africa to meet his relatives. Before leaving on his journey, Obama reflects on his expectations:

Would this trip to Kenya finally fill that emptiness? The folks back in Chicago thought so. It’ll be just like *Roots*, Will had said at my going-away party. A

⁷⁸⁵ Gerber, ‘Haley’s *Roots* and our own: An Inquiry into the Nature of a Popular Phenomenon’, p. 101.

⁷⁸⁶ Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, p. 138.

⁷⁸⁷ Kirstie M. McClure, ‘Speaking in Tenses: Narrative, Politics and Historical Writing’, *Constellations*, 5:2 (2002), 234-49, p. 245.

⁷⁸⁸ Kwame Kwei-Armah, ‘Going back to my Roots’, *BBC News Online* (23 March 2007), <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/6480995.stm>> [accessed 28 February 2009].

pilgrimage, Asante had called it. For them, as for me, Africa had become an idea more than an actual place, a new promised land, full of ancient traditions and sweeping vistas, noble struggles and talking drums. With the benefit of distance, we engaged Africa in a selective embrace ...⁷⁸⁹

It is perhaps significant that Obama recognizes that Africa is embraced with the “benefit of distance”, as it is the distance that characterizes the “selective embrace” and marks a lack, a gap which fuels nostalgic desire.⁷⁹⁰ Unlike Haley, Obama is not a descendent of slaves, but his need to get to know his deceased father and his paternal relations shows the importance of family and the underscores a vague feeling of Western “emptiness”, which in Obama’s case appears to spring from an indefinite mixture of genealogical bewilderment, personal grief, American racism, and a distant, romantic, Western view of Africa. Yet this nostalgic mix in turn becomes a common point of reference and belonging, partly shared by Obama and the “folks back in Chicago”. In this way, it is the nostalgia and the process of undertaking genealogical research itself that can create a sense of belonging, which perhaps is just – if not more – important than the object which is sought.

The genealogical quest often involves integrating and reframing various different types of archival material into one narrative. Obama describes his trip to Kenya, and in this part of his narrative he recounts the oral family history told by his grandmother. He also describes how he visited the graves of his grandfather and father and looked at photographs and “a rust coloured book the size of a passport, along with a few papers of different colors, stapled together and chewed at an angle along one side.”⁷⁹¹ The cultivated land, architecture, the stories told by his relatives, their photographs, letters and family resemblances can all be considered to be archival in that they attest to the existence of Obama’s father and grandfather and to some extent of Obama’s relation to them. However, Hussein II Onyango’s *Domestic Servant’s Pocket Register* starkly contrasts with other types of archival material in that it is explicitly hierarchical, formal and perhaps says more about colonialism and the unequal power relations than the individual, Onyango himself and his life. There is an evidentiary paradigm to be contended with here in which the official and the written record carries more weight and authority.⁷⁹² But in the context of

⁷⁸⁹ Barack Obama, *Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2008), p. 302.

⁷⁹⁰ From its Greek original roots, nostalgia means a longing to return home, or homesickness. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xiii.

⁷⁹¹ Obama, *Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, p. 425.

⁷⁹² Sue McKemmish, 'Traces: Document, record, archive, archives', in *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society*, ed. by Sue McKemmish (New South Wales: Charles Sturt University, 2005), pp. 1-20, p. 18.

Obama's story, all types of 'archive' appear to be synthesized by him through the process of storytelling:

This was it, I thought to myself. My inheritance. I rearranged the letters in a neat stack and set them under the registry book. Then I went out into the backyard. Standing before the two graves, I felt everything around me – the cornfields, the mango tree, the sky – closing in, until I was left with only a series of mental images, Granny's stories come to life.⁷⁹³

Such synthesis is perhaps akin to how we actually are and who we are becoming. Genealogy is not just about library work, it can be a way of resurrecting the dead in the imagination and making them 'known' through storytelling. As such, it is a process that transcends the distinction between public and private and between what is officially and traditionally 'archival' and what is not, as 'official' documentation is re-contextualised by becoming part of Obama's life story.⁷⁹⁴ Indeed, the evidentiary paradigm is perhaps turned on its head as, like Haley, oral genealogy in the form of "Granny's stories", have the strongest influence. In turn, this process is temporal and perpetual:

I looked at Granny, and she nodded at me, and I knew then that at some point the joy I was feeling would pass and that that, too, was part of the circle: the fact that my life was neither tidy nor static, and that even after this trip hard choices would always remain.⁷⁹⁵

Genealogical narrative can be seen as not only storytelling about the self and one's origins, but also part of one's obligations and moral evaluations, becoming part of the basis for one's "hard choices." It is also in this sense that it is a political process and has the power to repeatedly "father-forth."⁷⁹⁶

Motherland: A Genetic Journey

The award-winning television programme, *Motherland: A Genetic Journey* was produced by Takeaway Media for BBC Two and was aired in 2003. *Motherland* follows in Haley's footsteps in its quest for identity. However, the key to African origins is provided not by oral history but by genetics. The documentary announces itself as "the story of a quest to recover lost identity, a search by descendants of African slaves to discover who they are

⁷⁹³ Obama, *Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, p. 427.

⁷⁹⁴ Craven, 'From the Archivist's Cardigan to the Very Dead Sheep: What are Archives? What are Archivists? What do They Do?', pp. 19-20.

⁷⁹⁵ Obama, *Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, p. 377.

⁷⁹⁶ Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, p. 138.

and where they came from, an endeavour using the science of genetics to overturn the legacy of slavery.”⁷⁹⁷ Using newly developed techniques of DNA testing, *Motherland* was a British three-year project in which two hundred and twenty-nine volunteers whose grandparents were of Afro-Caribbean origin participated. The television documentary traced the journey of three of the project participants, Mark Anderson, Jacqueline Harriott and Beaula McCalla in search of their ancestry. *Roots* forms the generic pattern for the programme. As one of the scientists, Rick Kittles, quips: “It’s *Roots* II, *Roots* revisited.” As such, the project participants search for some clue that will provide grounds for them to visit and connect with Africa, the *Motherland*. This exotic ‘motherland’ is set in opposition to Britain, as at the start of the programme images of sand dunes, tribal horsemen and lush tropical coastline are set against the image of the project participants picnicking with their families on the white cliffs of Dover. Situated at the intersection of science, historiography and current debates about Britishness, the programme provides a space in which to explore people grappling with their identity and ancestry.

Mark’s fantasy ancestry is to discover that he was, like Kunta Kinte, of West African descent. However, the biological connection with Africa at first proves elusive. Like twenty-six per cent of males who took part in the survey, his closest matches on his paternal lineage are found to be European. It seems that science cannot overturn the legacy of slavery. Mark is shocked by the news. There is another sense in which the lack of paternal connection to Africa is painful. The Y chromosome is not only biologically sexed but is also culturally gendered. Whilst we have millions of ancestors, the Y chromosome is typically favoured because it solely inherited down the male line. The geneticist, Steve Jones writes:

The problem with family trees is that they have so many branches ... even allowing for the fact that each of us is inbred ... the numbers soon become impossible to deal with. I probably descend, through one branch or another, from William the Conqueror – but so do you, and so do millions of others, which slightly takes the gloss off the discovery. One set of genes escapes that problem. They are on the Y-chromosome, inherited like a surname down the male line. The Y is an arrow of manhood that flies from ‘Adam’ to every man alive today. In principle all men (and their wives and daughters, for they too have fathers) can use it to search out one crucial ancestor out of millions.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁷ *Motherland: A Genetic Journey*. Dir. Archie Baron. Prod. Tabitha Jackson and Neil Cameron. BBC/Takeaway Media. 2003. [broadcast 14 February 2003].

⁷⁹⁸ Steve Jones, 'Foreword', in Pomery, *DNA and Family History: How Genetic Testing Can Advance Your Genealogical Research*, p. v.

As Jones himself points out, he cannot be distinguished as especially different, not because one of his ancestors probably was the renowned William the Conqueror, but because “millions of others” can make a similar claim. For Jones, his Y chromosome forms a metaphorical target for his attention and his sense of uniqueness; it is his finding aid for searching out “one crucial ancestor out of millions.” As such, this chromosome achieves a certain cultural gloss. It becomes an assertion of masculinity, becoming a virile, dynamic and positive “arrow of manhood that flies from ‘Adam’ to every man”. Like surnames, women can only be part of this parenthetically; only through their male relatives can they claim this inheritance. Arguably, this obscures the main argument of genetic discovery that we are all alike genetically, even though we may not be equal. It also does not take into account Mark’s predicament, and overlooks the notion that a conception of fatherhood encompasses more than the biological passing on of genetic material.

To ‘get back to Africa’ Mark has to use the maternal route. His mtDNA shows a match with the Kanuri tribe in Southern Niger, the second poorest country in the world. The programme takes him to a remote region in the South East, to a village called Woudi the nearest place to the ancient town of Garoumele, where legend says that the Kanuri tribe originated. However, the *Roots* narrative of an African paradise lost through slavery and regained through homecoming is not one shared by the Kanuri tribe. There is a painful scene where Mark, without a translator attempts to communicate with the villagers. He states: “I am a descendant of a Kanuri woman” and attempts to use sign language to show that he is a descendant of a slave taken from their village. A man tells the other villagers that one of his female ancestors was a Kanuri slave and explains that: “Now they are free and have done well for themselves.” Later on, after showing him a poor man’s hut and explaining that that they have no money, he says to Mark: “You’ve done well but you’re no use to us.” For him, Mark is not a victim in the sense that Mark would perhaps like to be appreciated. Edward M. Bruner has found a similar attitude amongst Ghanaians in his research into the Afro-American black diasporan tourism to the area, who “seeing that diaspora blacks are prosperous and educated, feel they were in a sense fortunate in being taken as slaves, because now they are economically well off and have a higher standard of living than the Ghanaians.”⁷⁹⁹

This awkwardness appears to be lost on Mark who goes on to partake in a naming ceremony, choosing the name, Kaigama for himself. He is told that this name is from a

⁷⁹⁹ Edward M. Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora', *American Anthropologist*, 98:2 (1996), 290-304, p. 286: *JSTOR*, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/682888>> [accessed 8 October 2008].

great warrior slave. He later discovers that Kaigama was a warrior who was responsible for capturing slaves. It is at this point that he accepts that there are “two sides to the story”:

The irony of me returning to find out about my slave ancestors and then choosing the name of the actual person who would have been sent out to capture slaves, made me understand you know that this is a complex story, that its not one of just of one layer.

While at the start of the programme he describes his unease with the label ‘Black British’, he later becomes more accepting of it, describing his London ‘roots’:

What is personality or what is identity? That’s one thing I grapple with. England, London, South London, Battersea, Clapham Junction, that has been a major part of what I am today, and for me to deny that would be totally ridiculous ... but this place has played a major part of what I am today ... For me to know, to know for certainty, for the story of my DNA to be proven to be correct, for this to be the area of the world where my family originally came from, for that to be a fact and then to come here and be welcomed by the beginning of my bloodline. It’s phenomenal! That means that I’ve got I’ve got scientific proof and I go there and I’ve got spiritual proof.

For Beaula McCalla, Africa is a central part of her identity, and informs her decision to participate. As she explains to the viewer:

It’s my roots. It is me. It is my true African essence as I see it. I determine myself; I call myself an African first and foremost and for me to be able to say that and to explain to other people, I really need to know what that means. I’m not anti-European or anti-white, it’s nothing like that ... it’s time to focus on ourselves in a positive light ... I don’t see my ancestors as something that is far away from me. I left the continent five hundred years ago and I’m returning or I could return home just by that link ... they are family, they are blood, they are the true lineage.

Beaula’s mtDNA test results identified eight ‘exact matches’ which were located amongst the Bubi tribe in Bioko, Equatorial Guinea. Because the samples in the Cambridge database were anonymous they re-tested the village, finding Beatriz Uche Etachi to be the person with the nearest match to Beaula’s DNA. Finding and being ‘re-united’ with Beatriz is an ambivalent experience for Beaula. While she is initially overwhelmed and delighted to meet Beatriz and is welcomed into the village as a lost ‘daughter’ and given a plot of land, she comes to be slightly uneasy about the expectations and demands of her new found ‘family.’ A sense of detachment and disenchantment creeps in when she visits another village, Ureka in the “spiritual heartland” of Bioko, where another ‘exact’ match for DNA has been found. Despite partaking in womanhood rituals and a ceremony with the local spiritual man, over the course of her visit her self-determination and identification

with her African ‘true lineage’ comes into conflict with the familial expectations and responsibilities that are part and parcel of being related to the Bubi. As she explains:

I get this real sense that they’re waiting for something to happen and that’s not me. Any visitor that comes here its like ‘What can you do for us? What can you bring?’ I didn’t get the same feeling that they were waiting for me as family. It was more ‘Oh we have a relative, what can she do for us?’ I’ve grappled with that for a while, you know, gosh, what can I do? What can I do? And it comes back to ... sometimes you need to help yourself as well, you know, show that you help yourself.

Beaula goes on to imagine herself as being one of those who would have left the village and the constraints of communal living:

I don’t see myself as being one of the women here who would have stayed here, had children here, I think I would have, because of my spirit, because of the way I am, the first opportunity, let’s get out of here...If you know where home is, that’s enough. You can go back home wherever, whenever you feel like it and you don’t need to be there.

For Beaula, her African home is a spiritual symbolic place of comfort and strength that can be drawn upon voluntarily “whenever you feel like it” – it is not a place of enforced obligation. Arguably, the appeal of ethnic ancestry in modern Western society subsists in the fact that it offers both the freedom of choice and self-determination and at the same offers an unchangeable given, an essential ‘rootedness’. In her study of “symbolic ethnicity”, Mary Waters argues that for white Americans ethnicity provides them with “the best of all worlds: they can claim to be unique and special while simultaneously finding the community and conformity with others that they also crave. But that ‘community’ is of a type that will not interfere with a person’s individuality.”⁸⁰⁰ Because white Americans can choose which part of their ethnic ancestry to identify with or celebrate, they subtly imply that all heritages are equal and interchangeable, but as Waters argues “all ethnicities are not equal, all are not symbolic, costless, and voluntary.”⁸⁰¹ While Beaula’s ethnicity as a Black British woman is arguably not symbolic, costless or voluntary, her identity as a Bubi woman is – or at least she perhaps wishes it to be so.

Beaula’s DNA connection with her new found ‘relatives’ are statistically based on a probabilistic estimate. This aspect is downplayed in *Motherland* as the exigencies of DNA sampling are subsumed beneath the desire for a singular ancestral origin and the master

⁸⁰⁰ Mary C. Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 151.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid., p. 160.

narrative of “*Roots* II, *Roots* revisited.” In a follow-up to the documentary programme, another exact match for Beaula in Mozambique was revealed. As databases develop and as more samples are added, one’s ‘identity’ shifts, having significant consequences for those like Beaula who “may have already invested time, emotional energy and perhaps even money bonding with [a] region and its people.”⁸⁰² Such ‘bonding’ also demonstrates that there are stronger and more influential things than DNA that can bring people with different cultural backgrounds and languages into relationship. Despite its factual and scientific status, DNA testing raises complex moral and ethical questions. An oft-cited message that DNA shows up is the interrelatedness of the world, genetically we have millions of ancestors which are shared with millions of others; if the world is made up of such ‘family’ how can inequities be tolerated and endorsed? But as the web of relatedness collapses into universality, how can one’s attention and ‘relatedness’ be sustained?

Jacqueline’s journey is different to Mark’s and Beaula’s. For her and her Jamaican maternal family, the ‘motherland’ was England; consequently, Jacqueline was ambivalent about her African heritage:

Perhaps my African descent, something of that runs in my veins but it does not manifest itself in me. It’s sort of hidden and repressed, it’s not evident. I have no connection with Africa, but yes I suppose there is some African descent there which I have to recognize and acknowledge.

Instead her “quest is primarily to trace the lineage of the Strudwick family.” In doing so, she is “trying to seek an identification of who I am, who my family are and what lies ahead for my children.” Jacqueline does not visit Africa but stays in Jamaica with her mother’s relatives. While genetic testing reveals her joint European and African ancestry, it is traditional archival research that principally guides her to a specific location. She traces her mother’s lineage to a Shropshire gentleman, Henry Strudwick (d.1760) who is identified through a will deposited in the Jamaican archives. The will lists his property, including a slave called Sarah. Henry left money for the mulatto Sarah and her illegitimate children, which implies that he was the father. The will also provides the name of his sugar plantation, Pantra Pant, which Jacqueline visits with her relatives. On the way to visit the plantation they light-heartedly imagine Henry and Sarah’s relationship: “Sarah was an opportunist ... and she was beautiful ... what more can a man resist?” Once they arrive however, the inequalities inherent in such a relationship become apparent and their tone changes as they imagine what life was like for those in the “big house” and for the three hundred and fifty slaves who would have laboured long hours in the fields and in the sugar

⁸⁰² David Concar, ‘Meet the ancestors’, *New Scientist*, 15 February 2003, p. 22.

factory. Through the experience of visiting the plantation and imagining what life would have been like, Jacqueline's attitude changes:

I remember when Dr Shriver said to me 'Well it looks as though you've got about twenty-eight European in you and seventy-two African and I sort of said 'Excellent!' – it was an acknowledgement, 'Wow, I've actually got some European in me' ... but I take that back. I'm quite happy to have the African connection and the African line acknowledged. Its part of me and it's very important, particularly after having seen this and experienced what I've experienced ... so yes it's the sense of belonging, it's the sense of self esteem that it gives me. Proud to be a black woman. Proud to be of African descent. Proud to be of West Indian descent through my mother's line – all those sorts of things, an amalgam of who I am.

Clearly all three participants were changed in how they saw themselves and their families, as archival documents and DNA traces linked them to new places and people which enabled them to imagine and form connections. For Mark and Beaula, not only were their African links confirmed, but also their links with Britain. For Jacqueline, she was able to take pride in her black identity and her African and West Indian links after being affected by the disused sugar plantation of Pantra Pant. The Afro-Caribbean writer, Pearl Duncan, like Jacqueline, discovered she had white European as well as African roots when she discovered that she was related to the Scottish Smellie family. Whilst lineage can be drawn upon as a source of self-determination and political identification, archival research can also ambivalently undermine such a project. Unexpectedly for Duncan, her white ancestors became her "heroes".⁸⁰³ As she writes:

I've also learned that many black Americans are afraid, as I was initially, of finding a slave trader in their family tree, so they don't really want to talk about their European ancestors. I got into trouble with my black friends for saying that John Smellie was a more caring man than many other colonials because he left a record of his child. When you start looking into your genealogy, you have to come to terms with admirable and despicable behaviour.⁸⁰⁴

Genealogy, as a form of taking a stand, often involves having to come to terms with admirable and despicable behaviour.

Whilst Duncan's narrative is framed by the debates about being American and the role of slaves in founding the American nation, the search for identity, dramatized and explored in

⁸⁰³ Sarah Ebner, 'First Person: Pearl Duncan 'My Scottish ancestors were heroes'', *Financial Times Magazine*, 18/19 August 2007, p. 7.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

programmes such as *Motherland*, is framed by the recent debates over 'Britishness'.⁸⁰⁵ In 2003 Linda Colley noted a contemporary hunger for national or religious identity that was based upon a "much more widespread yearning for roots and a kind of ancestral purity."⁸⁰⁶ This "hunger for some kind of renewed anchorage, and often for a narrower, more traditional, and seemingly more secure sense of who they are" can arguably, be seen as a driver for the growth in family history in Britain over the last decade and indeed in projects such as *Motherland*.⁸⁰⁷ This kind of genealogy can be seen as politically dangerous in its exclusiveness. In a speech given as part the Fabian *Future of Britishness* conference in 2006, Gordon Brown argued that "there is always a risk that, when people are insecure, they retreat into more exclusive identities rooted in 19th century conceptions of blood, race and territory."⁸⁰⁸ In opposition to such "exclusive identities", Brown made the case for a shared British identity, "expressed through our history and our institutions." For him, Britishness is perceived as a shared liberal value which is embodied in a history of the "individual standing firm against tyranny" that endorses "the exciting idea of empowering citizens to control their own lives."⁸⁰⁹ History is, by implication, a source of inspiration that liberates and empowers the individual to make individual choices. This view echoes the geneticist, Fatima Jackson's comment on *Motherland* that "Self-determination is the root of self-empowerment" but both comments perhaps overlook the problematic history of the British slave trade, the current social and political position of blacks within British society, and the desire for individuals to choose genealogy as a mode of identification. Genealogy can perhaps only be as liberating as far it involves individual choice and self-determination. As such, where does this leave the shared inherited archive and things we cannot change or choose?

The historian, Peter Mandler views the recent use of DNA genealogy and interest in "deep ancestry" as a form of a more individualist identity. With a sense of urgency he writes:

As physical traces of family are erased by social and geographical mobility, more and more people seek to create a virtual family projected backwards in historical time ... DNA testing can nominally affiliate you to one of the seven 'tribes' descended from one of seven prehistoric ancestors, or, more plausibly,

⁸⁰⁵ Pearl Duncan, 'Roundup: Talking About History: Pearl Duncan: How DNA is rewriting history', *History News Network* (7 January 2008), <<http://hnn.us/roundup/entries/51903.html>> [accessed 9 April 2009].

⁸⁰⁶ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. 2nd edn (London: Pimlico, 2003), pp. xii, xvii.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ Gordon Brown, *The Future of Britishness* (London: Fabian Society, 14th January 2006), <http://www.fabian-society.org.uk/press_office/display.asp?id=520&type=news&cat=43> [accessed 12 April 2006].

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

find people in Devon directly descended from prehistoric Devonians whose DNA has been extracted from excavated bones. Television archaeologists invite you to 'meet your ancestors'. Perhaps even these very remote ancestors provide a more individualized form of identity, better suited to a highly individualized society than the traditional markers of identity, class, religion or nation.⁸¹⁰

DNA is seen as transcending the traditional markers of identity, providing a more individual and neutral route into a past before "class, religion or nation" took hold. However, the "traditional markers of identity" can be found in the interpretation of DNA material. The geneticist and founder of the DNA genetics company, *Oxford Ancestors*, Bryan Sykes, in his book, *Blood of the Isles* (2006) describes the "genetic structure of the Isles" as "stubbornly Celtic." Presuming that his readers are British, he states that "we are an ancient people." He writes that despite centuries of invasion and "opposed settlement from abroad", these invaders "have barely scratched the topsoil of our deep-rooted ancestry."⁸¹¹ His use of the metaphor of "topsoil" highlights the modern living body as the site of archaeological evidence; we are not newly created but physically and unconsciously carry traces of the ancient past within the interior of our cells. Our genetic material has become the new frontier of historical discovery, the new biological archive that has superseded the "fading manuscripts in dimly lit libraries" and the "rusting weapons in glass cases."⁸¹² In contrast to the deterioration of these traces of the past, DNA is remarkably virile, alive and robust. It is described as "the real survivors of our times." Not only this, unlike artefacts and documents we all possess and inherit DNA, and therefore it "really is the history of the people, by the people."⁸¹³ In this way, people collectively embody a heroic genetic archive. However, such language masks the processes of archivization at work. We cannot easily read our 'ancestral signature' or 'junk DNA', while we can easily take a cheek swab, we need science and information technology to extract it, code it and compare it to the other data and to interpret it. Disturbingly, the language and models which are used by companies to interpret and explain these new biological records often owe a troubling debt to earlier nineteenth and twentieth-century value-laden historical and social categories of race and ethnicity. Can DNA *really* tell us who we are?

Yet the recourse to DNA testing is also used as a way of finding underlying similar types beyond the appearance of skin colour and physical features. Recently the story of *Roots* has been furthered by DNA testing. The website company, *ancestry.co.uk*, carried out a Y-

⁸¹⁰ Mandler, *History and National Life*, p. 3.

⁸¹¹ Sykes, *Blood of the Isles: Exploring the Genetic Roots of Our Tribal History*, p. 287.

⁸¹² *Ibid.*, pp.287-88.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*, p.288.

DNA test on Haley's nephew, Chris Haley in 2007. They discovered that he shared forty-five out of forty-six genetic markers with a Scottish man, Thomas Baff. At the *Who Do You Think You Are? Live* 2009 show, Thomas' daughter, June Baff-Black, who could trace her "lineage back to 17th century Scotland", was reunited with her black 'cousin'.⁸¹⁴ On one level, the link between Baff and Haley is not very strong. Baff was only one out of approximate fifty thousand entries in ancestry's DNA database. The probabilities of June and Haley sharing a common ancestor six generations ago is fifty per cent, while the chances of them sharing a common ancestor eighteen generations ago rises to ninety-five per cent and that far back in time they would share only one common ancestor out of 131,072 grandfathers of that generation.⁸¹⁵ However, on another level, the connection is symbolically important for showing the relatedness amongst blacks and whites. Yet the problematic nature of such relatedness was not discussed, as the story was principally used as a publicity stunt for advertising ancestry.co.uk's services and for promoting the 'Scottish Year of Homecoming.' Most importantly for Haley, the DNA test confirmed the Baugh connection on his paternal grandfather's line, thereby giving overall credence to the Haley genealogy in general:

What it means to me in terms of the Haley family history is that its verifiable that the oral history that uncle Alex passed on through the years is more true than fable and I think that many things that hurt me personally, and many in the family, were those people who said, 'Well you know he made this story up, its a lie, its not true, its plagiarized', things of that sort and I think that this confirms not only that this specific line through McQueen is traceable back to the British Isles, and now we find Scotland, but perhaps that some of these other stories that have been denigrated in the past may have more credence as well.⁸¹⁶

In this way, DNA is used as a form of verification when the paper trail has gone cold and because of its 'scientific' status and seeming immutability is seen as just as trustworthy as oral evidence or written documentation, if not more. As Olivier Van Calster of ancestry comments: "With science such as DNA becoming increasingly popular for use in furthering family history, it is exciting to see many of those reasonable assumptions – even

⁸¹⁴ 'Roots author has Scottish blood', *BBC News Online* (1 March 2009), <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/7917605.stm>> [accessed 2 March 2009].

⁸¹⁵ Rita Rubin, 'DNA testing: 'Roots' author Haley rooted in Scotland, too', *USA Today* (6 April 2009), <http://www.usatoday.com/tech/science/genetics/2009-04-06-haley-dna_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip> [accessed 9 April 2009].

⁸¹⁶ Also featured as part of the online genealogical television service, 'Haley-Baff Genetic Family Reunion', *Roots Television* (2009), <http://www.rootstelevision.com/players/player_dna3.php?bctid=14655160001&bclid=14621417001> [accessed 2 March 2009].

300-year-old ones – becoming established as facts.”⁸¹⁷ However, as *Motherland* shows, such ‘factual’ recognition and ‘proof’ of relationship, is not so simple.

Despite the use of DNA testing to uncover relatedness beneath the cultural and aesthetic appearance of skin colour, identity is still heavily tied up with facial recognition. The Channel 4 television series, *Face of Britain* was based upon the research project headed by the Oxford geneticist, Sir Walter Bodmer which sought DNA samples from current British population in order to map the biological traces of the ancient Celts, Vikings and Saxons.⁸¹⁸ In the programme the work of psychologist, Tony Little of Liverpool University was called upon in order to compare a reconstructed face of the Bleadon Man, with an idealized composite portrait of current inhabitants of Bury St Edmonds, Suffolk. Using digital photographs of contemporary individuals he selected common features from each face to create an average for each facial feature, which was then built up and combined to create a composite image.⁸¹⁹ While the programme was based on the scientific credentials of Bodmer’s research, and the forensic anthropological work of Caroline Wilkinson, the title of the programme and the section featuring Little’s composite faces is significant from another angle, around which the sceptre of race lingers. Here, just like Galton, a composite of facial characteristics were being sought in order to provide a point of comparison between today’s inhabitants of Britain and those of the “ancient Britons.” In the accompanying book to the television series, Robin McKie concluded:

Thus between the faces of Bleadon Man and his successor from Brighton, we can see the crucial differences between the two types of people who make up the people of the British Isles: ancient Britons from the Celtic fringe, and the men and women of the nation’s Anglo-Saxon heartland. So if you want to hold a couple of images of the true faces of Britain in your head, remember images of these two faces ...⁸²⁰

Yet what do these two “true faces of Britain”; a reconstructed clay portrait based on a skull and a composite portrait of contemporary inhabitants of the “nation’s Anglo-Saxon heartland” represent? And why should we “remember” them? At the very least the latter is an idealized form – it is a young, white unblemished face, a fictional ‘nobody’. Here a historical people (who probably did not define themselves as ‘Anglo-Saxon’) is elided with a modern people and is made into one homogenous facial type and skin colour. While Galton writes of ‘races’ and the *Face of Briton* seeks “ancient Britons”, both use the same

⁸¹⁷ ‘Roots author has Scottish blood’.

⁸¹⁸ *Face of Britain*. Prod. Wag TV. Channel Four. 2007. [broadcast April 2007].

⁸¹⁹ Robin McKie, *Face of Britain* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2006), pp. 165-66.

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-68.

category of 'Anglo-Saxon', both seek corporeal evidence in today's population, and both use similar imaging techniques. The ideal image, while theoretically non-existent is dangerous because of its attraction. It is a point of self-misrecognition, because all deviate from the norm; it does not allow for difference but subsumes the deviant.

The biological archive is problematic because it gives the impression of scientific neutrality yet relies upon social and cultural stories for its interpretation and meaning. Against this background, the epic search for one's origins and identity remains a potent form of narrative that enables people to take a stand and to existentially explore their being and relatedness. Such exploration is perhaps made more urgent by biotechnologies, such as sperm donation and surrogacy, which are remaking the 'natural' genealogical order with its obligations and interlocutions. Certainly, the archivization of genealogical knowledge faces new challenges. In 2004 the ban on sperm donor information was lifted in the UK. Children of sperm donors now have the right to find out personal details of their biological fathers when they turn eighteen and can access non-identifying information from the age of sixteen. Those, however, born before 2004 have no obvious way of tracing their biological fathers or half-siblings. In response to a demand for information, a worldwide 'Donor Sperm Registry' has been created so that biological half-brothers and sisters can find each other.⁸²¹ This has implications for information management as archives, and their interpretation and use, have an important part to play in the definition of family, both politically and personally.⁸²² As such, archivists will perhaps have to become increasingly aware and think through the notion that "archivization produces as much as it records the event" if they are to fully and responsibly play their part in the twenty-first century.⁸²³

The importance of archives lies in their appeal to the factual truth and their potential role in the creation of life stories. They can stand for shared truth and can act as a common reference point, what you see and read can be related to what someone else sees and reads, a synecdoche of recognition for *this* person and not another. This recognition and shared understanding of unique existence, works against the anonymity of the statistical no-one and the idealized composite 'face of Britain'. Verifiable genealogical evidence is important for this reason but it is hard work, and archives seem to promise more than they can deliver. The archive, especially the national archival institution has a difficult position to

⁸²¹ 'Who's my half-brother? Where's my half-sister?', Dir. Katie Whittaker. Radio Four. 2009. [broadcast 23 April 2009].

⁸²² Judith Etherton, 'The Role of Archives in the Perception of Self', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 27:2 (2006), 227-46.

⁸²³ Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, p. 17.

play – as the conduit of national identity it has its limitations and as an instrument of modernity, it subsumes the unique existent. Yet because the archive is a theatre of self-identity, its evidential role, which is brought into action through shared access, “the sum total of aspects” means that, like the mediascape, it is a political space, even if archival problems are principally articulated as technical and professional ones.⁸²⁴ As I have demonstrated in my discussion of the Holocaust, the tensions between private and public memory, between family history and History are not merely ones of scale and attention – they have a moral import. The predominance of genealogical narratives within the mediascape has perhaps inverted and highlighted these dichotomies, in turn challenging the traditional notion of the archive as the inert and objective sum of the essential remnants of the nation.

⁸²⁴ Richard Harvey Brown and Beth Davis-Brown, 'The Making of Memory: The Politics of Archives, Libraries and Museums in the Construction of National Consciousness', *History of the Human Sciences*, 11:4 (1998), 17-32, p. 30.

Conclusion: Genealogy as Theatre of Self-Identity

I have picked-up the abandoned child of British genealogy from the doorstep of the academy and sought to adopt it by investigating its origins, establishing its relations, and analysing its role within popular contemporary narratives. This process of ‘adoption’ has led me to explore diverse but related subjects from antiquarianism, to nineteenth-century print culture, to eugenics, to DNA testing, to contemporary television programmes. Such diversity is not only a reflection of the richness of genealogical interests and practices, but also an expression of the vitality of the genealogical imagination within the fabric of British culture. As such, genealogy is worthy of critical study and has much to contribute to other disciplines and other topics of research. In particular, I have exposed the genealogical quest narrative as a type of literature that is related to an antiquarian tradition. Similarly, antiquarianism has been shown to be a common ancestor of both genealogy and history. In the field of archival science I have provided a theoretical analysis of why, and how, archives fascinate genealogists and also shed light on the importance of the genealogical model for the notion of heritage.

At the same time genealogy can stand on its own terms. By exploring genealogy’s connections with antiquarianism, I have demonstrated that genealogy does have a pedigree. By employing a genealogical approach to genealogy itself, I have uncovered its earlier manifestations and relationships, demonstrating that genealogy has its own history, historical agents and situated communities. Antiquarians and genealogists formed “epistemological communities” as they founded societies, corresponded, published and shared copies of archival material, wrote criticism, pressed for legislation and contributed to “archival intelligence” amongst the wider population.⁸²⁵ In the late nineteenth century in particular, genealogists organized themselves into groups, made more genealogical material available through transcription and publication and forged international and diasporan contacts.

My historical investigation has led me to re-establish the connection between genealogy and eugenics, and to explore this connection in relation to archivization. In nineteenth-century Britain, national statistics came to represent the national and imperial social body. Driven by modernity – epitomized by the introduction of railways, migration and urbanization – as well as eugenicist and utopian ideas, archives, such as the GRO and

⁸²⁵ Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot*, p. 8; Yakel and Torres, 'AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise'.

Galton's Eugenics Record Office, became disciplinary tools, if not totally effective tools, for keeping the social body physically and morally 'healthy'. At the same time the 'scientific' investigation of heredity, promoted as eugenics by Galton, provided a role for family history in the management of human reproduction. In this way, genealogy, combined with anthropometrics became a 'scientific' modern tool of socio-biological control and manipulation, which could be harnessed by the expert. The dark side of such a 'modern' utilitarian project reached its zenith in the eugenicist programmes of the Nazi party, and indeed it can be argued that the Holocaust was a result of misguided modernist impulses.⁸²⁶ Certainly genealogy's association with eugenics has contributed to its poor reputation within the historical discipline, as Bates has pointed out, it did become "the methodological basis of genocide."⁸²⁷

Yet, as I have demonstrated, genealogical narrative can also be seen as a reaction to the manipulative powers of modernity and the "vast and powerful forces [that] are at work to docket us as card-index entries, labour units, consumer factors, social statistics – anything but men with names."⁸²⁸ In 1942 in the Warsaw ghetto, the Jewish artist, Gele Sekstein, wrote a brief biography of her parents, commenting briefly on their physical and social status:

My father was a shoemaker. His children from his first wife are not respectable, they are underworld people. My mother, on the other hand, came from a prestigious line – the Landau family. Because of a deformity – one of her hands was paralyzed – she had to marry my father. She did not have a good life and died young.

Eighteen-year old Nahum Grywacz scribbled: "*Remember, my name is Nahum Grzywacz*" (original emphasis). Both these notes were hidden and buried as part of the Oyneg Shabes archive which was organized by left-wing historian, Emanuel Ringelblum, as an active attempt to record the everyday lives, or *Alltagsgeschichte*, of the Jewish people. In the words of Gustawa Jareckato, these records were to be "hurled like a stone under history's wheel in order to stop it."⁸²⁹ Here was an assertion of the personal story against the march of history, the story of the unique existent versus the anonymity of the concentration camp.

⁸²⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989).

⁸²⁷ Bates, 'Welcome Speech'.

⁸²⁸ Stewart, 'Thar's Gold in Them Thar Pedigrees!', p. 2.

⁸²⁹ Cited by Samuel D. Kassow, *Who will write our history? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 4,11,7.

It is in this respect that genealogy can be interpreted as a desire for semi-autobiographical narrative which includes archives as necessary evidentiary ‘other witnesses’ or traces, through which the self is revealed as both a unified self and as a ‘unique existent’. This is how archives disclose to us, and to others, who we are. At the same time, the definition and interpretation of the archive, its redundancy and fragmentary nature, has a political import. Whoever is excluded from the archive is limited from remembrance and, as often in the case of national archives, from public remembrance, representing a metaphorical ‘abortion’, or non-existence of the public existent or citizen.⁸³⁰ Whoever is included is also implicitly included because of the worthiness of their actions within the public sphere. In this way, this demonstrates that archives have another function than that of providing tangible evidence of business transactions; they have an ontological function of being necessary ‘other’ evidentiary witnesses, revealing the narratability of who we are as unique historical beings, who, nevertheless, do not stand alone.

In its nostalgia, which is “coeval with modernity itself”, genealogy – whether pursued as a left-or right-wing project – perhaps hearkens back to a *Gemeinschaft* model of community and sense of familial time, where social relations were based on face-to-face contact.⁸³¹ On these terms, it can be considered as anti-modern. Yet whether such relations existed or still exist is perhaps a moot point because, as I have argued, the archivization of genealogical narrative can involve the creation of imagined communities of close relationships.

Genealogy can also be a mechanism of self-identity, which can enable people to find their moral horizon of interlocution. As such it can be a mode for finding out who we are and where we are placed, enabling a kind of second or perhaps even third kind of ‘birth’ which is existential and familial, and which can be different and separate to the ‘birth’ of the citizen into the imagined national ‘family’ which is enabled through general registration.⁸³²

A further nostalgic aspect is not only a desire for a lost time and type of community but also a desire to find a lost home. From its Greek original roots, ‘nostalgia’ means a longing to return home, or homesickness.⁸³³ This nostalgia or desire for a lost home, which can be found embedded within the pattern of the *Roots* pilgrimage, is pervasive. Whilst, as I have shown, the promise that the *Roots* narrative of victimhood and self-empowerment offers is

⁸³⁰ Taylor writes that archivists should “try to preserve names attached to case files” because posterity “will not thank us for nameless microbiographies...They are the ancestors of the future and we should not permit of mass executions by archival decapitation.” Taylor, ‘The Collective Memory: Archives and Libraries as Heritage’, p. 126.

⁸³¹ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xvi.

⁸³² Bowen-Moore, *Hannah Arendt's Philosophy of Natality*.

⁸³³ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xiii.

highly problematic, the need to create a narrative about the self and the role of genealogical connection and archives within such storytelling is a significant and pervasive part of contemporary culture. *Roots* not only provided a blueprint for a modern epic tale of genealogical research but it also offered a different cultural genealogy or “Pilgrim’s Rock” for black Britons and Americans.⁸³⁴ Whilst historically false, it was metaphorically genealogical in that it had the power to ‘father-forth’ and reconfigure people’s lives.⁸³⁵

This aspect also reveals an ambiguity within genealogical discourse. On the one hand, genealogy is focused on inheritance and more recently the fatalism of genetic inheritance. On the other hand, the identifications, imaginations and narratives which abound in genealogy demonstrate that it can be a vehicle for self-expression and for making “hard choices”;⁸³⁶ as Beaula McCalla’s experience in *Motherland* showed, to some extent choosing who one wishes to be related and aligned to, and deciding what that means. This latter aspect perhaps represents a very modern aspect of genealogy, which contrasts with the traditional restrictions associated with genealogy, as Rabbi Jonathan Sacks argues: “Long gone are the days when our identities, beliefs, and life chances were narrowly circumscribed by where and to whom we happened to be born. We are no longer actors in a play written by tradition and directed by community in which roles are allocated by accidents of birth. Instead careers, relationships and lifestyles have become things we freely choose from a superstore of alternatives. Modernity is the transition from fate to choice.”⁸³⁷ In this respect, genealogy has become a modern mode of self-determination and part of consumerist culture.

This creative and imaginative aspect of genealogy, the potential choice of affiliation, is often overlooked by those who would wish to dismiss genealogy simply as un-modern and fatalistically restrictive. At the same time, it is perhaps the creative and fictional aspects of genealogy which have contributed to its traditionally poor reputation amongst professional historians and indeed professional genealogists have wished to distance themselves from it too. This tension can be seen in the recurring fault-line that runs throughout this thesis and which appears upon the numerous occasions in which genealogies were shown to be false. From the sixteenth and seventeenth century heralds who recorded unsubstantiated pedigrees, to the Shipway case and Somerby and Burke in the nineteenth century, to

⁸³⁴ Ottoway, 'Doubts raised over story of the big TV slave saga: Tangled Roots', p. 17.

⁸³⁵ Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, p. 138.

⁸³⁶ Obama, *Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, p. 377.

⁸³⁷ Jonathan Sacks, *The Reith Lectures*. 'The Persistence of Faith'. Radio Four. 1990.
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/the-reith-lectures/archive/>> [accessed 2 June 2009].

Haley's *Roots*, genealogy has been and still is open to fraudulent practices. Such examples can be dismissed as sloppy or highly immoral historical work, or debated as a matter of genre, but they are also in some cases an expression – if a deeply flawed one – of what is desired through archives, and of what is desired to be true. This desire is not only an expression of vanity but is closely tied up with identity and the role that imagination plays in connecting people with their close relations and with processes of interlocation. It is also a feature that may not be so 'modern'. After all, like *Roots*, Burke's listings also had a similar power to 'father-forth' in their ability to manufacture esquires.

Similarly, the processes of moral interlocation are not entirely new. It can be found in Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656), the aim of which was "to incite the present and future ages to a virtuous imitation."⁸³⁸ For Katenkamp, the purpose of writing a family history was to give moral examples of virtue and vice, creating "a Beacon to warn future Navigators on the sea of Life from venturing on the same shore and making a like shipwreck of their Peace."⁸³⁹ Comparable processes of interlocation can be found in *Who Do You Think You Are?* when Davina McCall contemplates the life-stories of her two ancestors, one French, one English:

Having viewed my lives ... I look at my two ancestors and there are great similarities, you know – great principles, men of integrity, kind, loved their families, upright. They even kind of looked the same. So I'm not that split up. I am more of a whole person, I suppose, in a sense. And you know it's interesting in both stories people were saying to me 'This is an ancestor to be proud of' and I'm proud of that. I have roots that are really amazing.⁸⁴⁰

While pride or shame in ancestry is nothing new, in contrast to Dugdale and Katenkamp, for McCall, the story is not so much to warn or incite future generations, but for her to understand and learn about herself. The telling of two stories, the English and French, become one through her journey and narrative of identification, her pride in her ancestors making her feel more of a "whole person."⁸⁴¹ At the same time, this pride is articulated through sharing the stories with others, through interlocation with the people who were saying 'This is an ancestor to be proud of.' Through the telling of her genealogical story, McCall articulates her self.

⁸³⁸ Dugdale, *The antiquities of Warwickshire illustrated from records, leiger-books, manuscripts, charters, evidences, tombes, and armes: beautified with maps, prospects and portraictures* p. 4, in *Early English Books Online*.

⁸³⁹ Merivale, *Family Memorials*, pp. 119-20.

⁸⁴⁰ 'Episode 1: Davina McCall', *Who Do You Think You Are?* Series Seven. Dir. Kate Scholefield. Prod. Colette Flight. BBC/ Wall to Wall. 2009. [broadcast 15 July 2009].

⁸⁴¹ Cavarero, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, p. 2.

What are the implications of this theatre of self-identity? What, at all, has changed? On one level, as I have argued, the grounds upon which notions of worthiness are built have changed; what is to be remembered in the public sphere, or which actions and who is defined as ‘archival’ or ‘historical’, is perhaps changing or being inverted as in Arendtian terms the social sphere has taken over the political.⁸⁴² The traditional archival evidentiary paradigm, as I have demonstrated, is also challenged by genealogical sources such as the oral history of Obama’s Granny, of Jane Borthwick’s nineteenth-century sampler and other more domestic, and often gendered, sources of evidence. But perhaps what is most significant, at least since the First World War, is the notion of the creation of generational communities of time, shaped and imagined through communal experience, shared grief and the mass media.

Now the challenge is that there appears to be *more* of everything: education, literacy, access, media, heritage. The heritage movement is closely involved with a rapidly changing mediascape and new forms of media. State involvement with heritage has increased, as has the academic engagement with heritage and public history. And now heritage can encompass a broadening and expanding terrain as more museums, galleries, libraries and archives, landscapes and personal memories – arguably everything – becomes past and up for grabs. Within this context, archives are not only part of a “gigantic, nationwide administration of housekeeping”, at the genealogical level they not only expose the national citizen, but they can also be part of the articulation of the self and have the potential to disclose the *who* beyond the private confines of the family to the television audience or the Internet user.⁸⁴³ At the same time, everything has the potential to become archival, and the questions of what and who inherits remain. Yet to say that everybody inherits everything, that heritage is accessible for all, is perhaps to miss the point of inheritance, which, as I have showed, is closely tied to the notion of genealogy. As Paxman said of his ancestors in *Who Do You Think You Are?*: “I don’t know these people, I wouldn’t recognise them if I fell over them – but I’m connected to them.”⁸⁴⁴ Arguably, this personal sense of connection and heritage is achieved through the narrative and the physical, phenomenological encounter we each of us experience with archives, both private and public. It is for this reason that archives matter, and it is the articulation of this meaning and the capacity to enact these encounters which should be at the forefront of our

⁸⁴² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 28.

⁸⁴³ Ibid., pp.28-29.

⁸⁴⁴ ‘Episode 1: Jeremy Paxman’, Dir. Oord and Chu.

minds when embracing new technologies. Archives do not just provide information; they are part of a performance, part of a genealogical theatre of self-identity.

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